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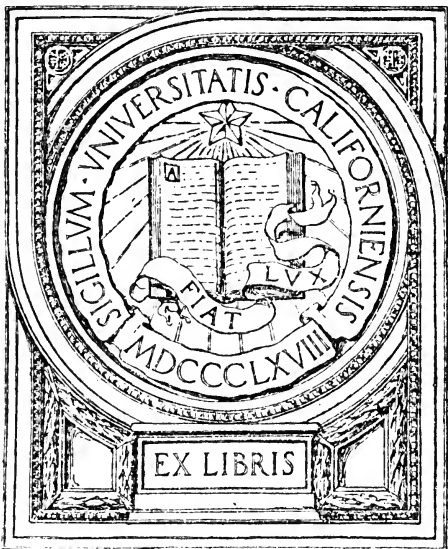
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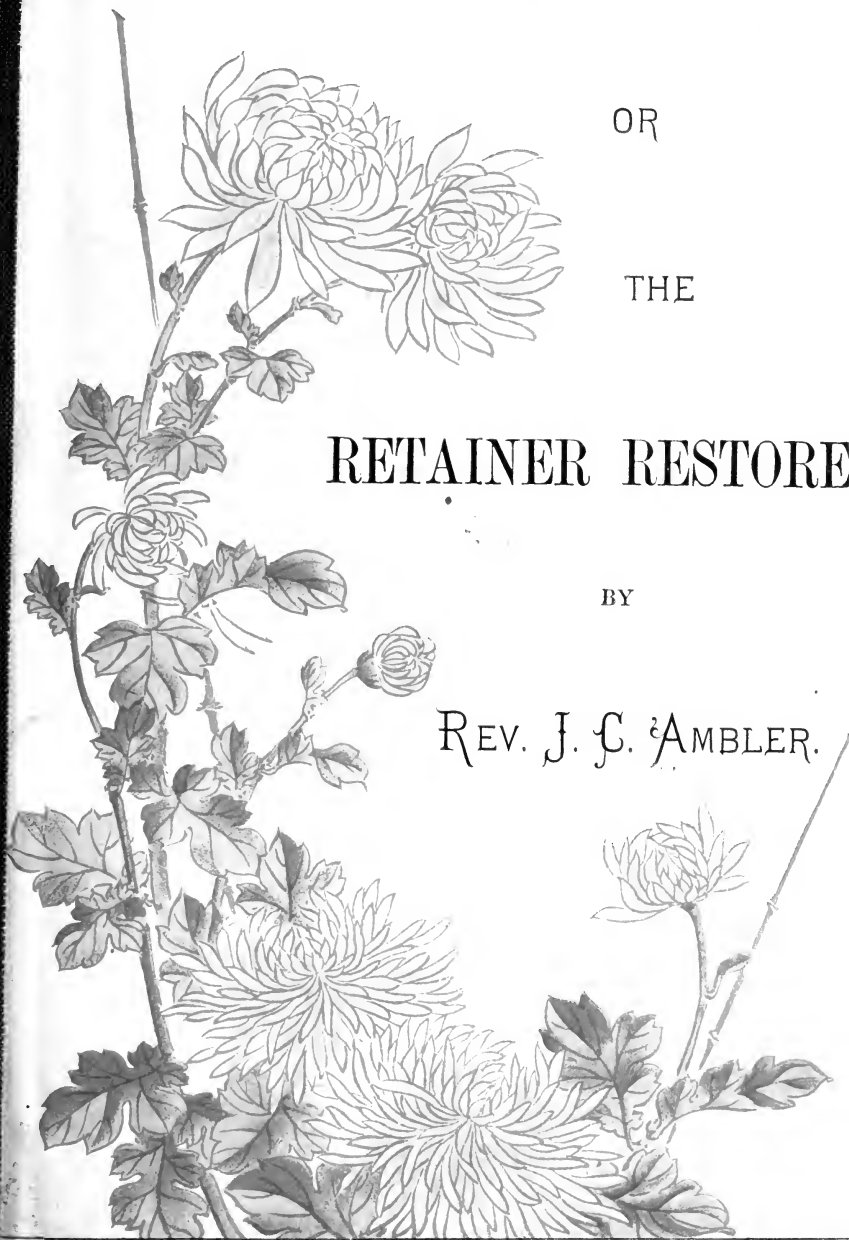
OR

THE

RETAINER RESTORED

BY

REV. J. C. AMBLER.



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			Mr. Kase Etsuki.
			Mr. Chiba.
			Miss Kiku Waller.

KASE ETSUKI

— OR —

THE
OF
THE

❧ THE RETAINER RESTORED. ❧



A MEMOIR

BY THE

REV. JOHN C. AMBLER.



TO BE SOLD FOR THE BENEFIT OF EVANGELISTIC WORK IN
CONNECTION WITH THE JAPAN MISSION OF THE
PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

1894.

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Printed at
THE TOKYO TSUKIJI TYPE FOUNDRY,
TOKYO, JAPAN.

To my first teacher in Japanese

Mr. T. Mori, of Osaka, Japan.

THIS LITTLE MEMOIR IS

Gratefully Dedicated.

762049

“ And we also bless thy holy Name for all thy servants departed this life in thy faith and fear ; beseeching thee to give us grace so to follow their good examples, that with them we may be partakers of thy heavenly Kingdom. Grant this, O Father, for Jesus Christ’s sake, our only Mediator and advocate. Amen.”

Part of the prayer for the Church Militant.

PREFACE.

Canon Tristram of Durham, England, has recently visited Japan, China, and Ceylon. Concerning the Buddhism of these countries he says: "If this is the light of Asia, all we can say is that the light that is in it is darkness." Of Japan he says: "Has Japan hope? What hope is there in Buddhism, beyond the yearning for all their subsequent life to be obliterated in "Eternal sleep"? You see it in their faces. While the children are bright and happy, as children always are, I never saw an elderly Japanese whose face, unless he was a Christian, did not seem gloomy and hopeless and vacant." In this humble attempt to show what "the Light of the World" can do towards dissipating this gloom and vacancy of life, I must acknowledge indebtedness to several Japanese friends who have put me in possession of historical and other data and to Rev. H. J. Foss, of Kobe, Japan, for some of the translations. Also to Mr. W. D. Cox of Tōkyō for a revision of the text.

I have also availed myself of translations contained in Rev. William Imbrie's "Handbook of English and Japanese Etymology," and in Prof. B. H. Chamberlain's "Romanized Japanese Reader."

All of the verses contained in this memoir are correct renderings of the Japanese originals.

J. C. A.

ELEGY NEAR A HEATHEN GRAVEYARD.

METRE OF GRAY'S ELEGY.



1. The temple bell rings out the lingering day,
The priest to Buddha chants his evening hymn ;
A mystic stillness gathers o'er the way,
As darkness overspreads the twilight dim.
2. Yon old grey stone with rounded face and form,
One hand in blessing raised, the other still ;
Sits motionless through sunshine, rain, and storm,
Sphinx-like—a type of stern, unbending will.
3. Hard by this figure, carved on lotus flower,
A low wall runs, a gate stands open wide ;
Within, the dead await that dreadful hour,
When all must rise, who in those graves abide.
4. Who may this be, wrought thus in solid rock, .
With fixed features, placid, mutely calm ?
Unmoved, unfeeling, he would seem to mock
The mourning scenes he views, and gives no balm.
5. Fashioned with care and skill, of comely size,
Shaped by man's hand, creation of his mind,
A priest from far was called to ope his eyes,*
He hears not, speaks not, handles not, is blind.
6. From age to age, undaunted, undismayed
By summer's heat, by winter's icy cold ;
He eats not, sleeps not, feels nor sun, nor shade,
His body's lichen-covered, green with mould.

* Idol-worshippers in Japan have a ceremony for consecrating an idol called *Kaigen*, which means "opening the eyes." For this occasion a famous priest is invited from a well-known temple and performs various incantations, after which the God is supposed to take possession of the idol.

7. The widow's moan, the orphan's anguished wail,
Break at his feet and die away again,
Those pleading accents which o'er men prevail,
Surge around *him* as wild waves beat the main.
8. The pilgrim heavy-laden, toil-worn, sad,
From distant hamlet comes to seek repose,
Drags hither weary limbs in tatters clad,
Does penance, counts his beads, tells out his woes.
9. The cares of age, the burdened weight of years,
Find no relief, no peace, no rest in him ;
Untouched by gloom, remorse, repentance, tears,
Where human looks would soften, *his* more grim.
10. At early dawn, awaked from troubled sleep,
The peasant comes to worship at his feet,
Then toils in fields of rice through miry deep,
And comes again at eve with service meet.
11. When sickness, sin, or sorrow he bewails,
He hither turns with penitential face ;
And finds, alas ! a block of stone that fails
To give him strength or comfort, aid or grace.
12. In vain man strives to pierce that heart of stone,
No solace there, from burdens no release,
Alas ! to heathen 'tis as yet unknown
There is but *One* can bid life's tempests cease.
13. Uprise then, Christian heralds ! loud proclaim,
Emmanuel, the Babe of Bethlehem,
With hearts of burning love, with tongues of flame,
In heathen lands preach Christ, "The Light of Men."



CHAPTER I.

“Conquer self, and next thy men,
Overcome the foemen then:
An thou would'st a general be
Thou must gain these victories three.”

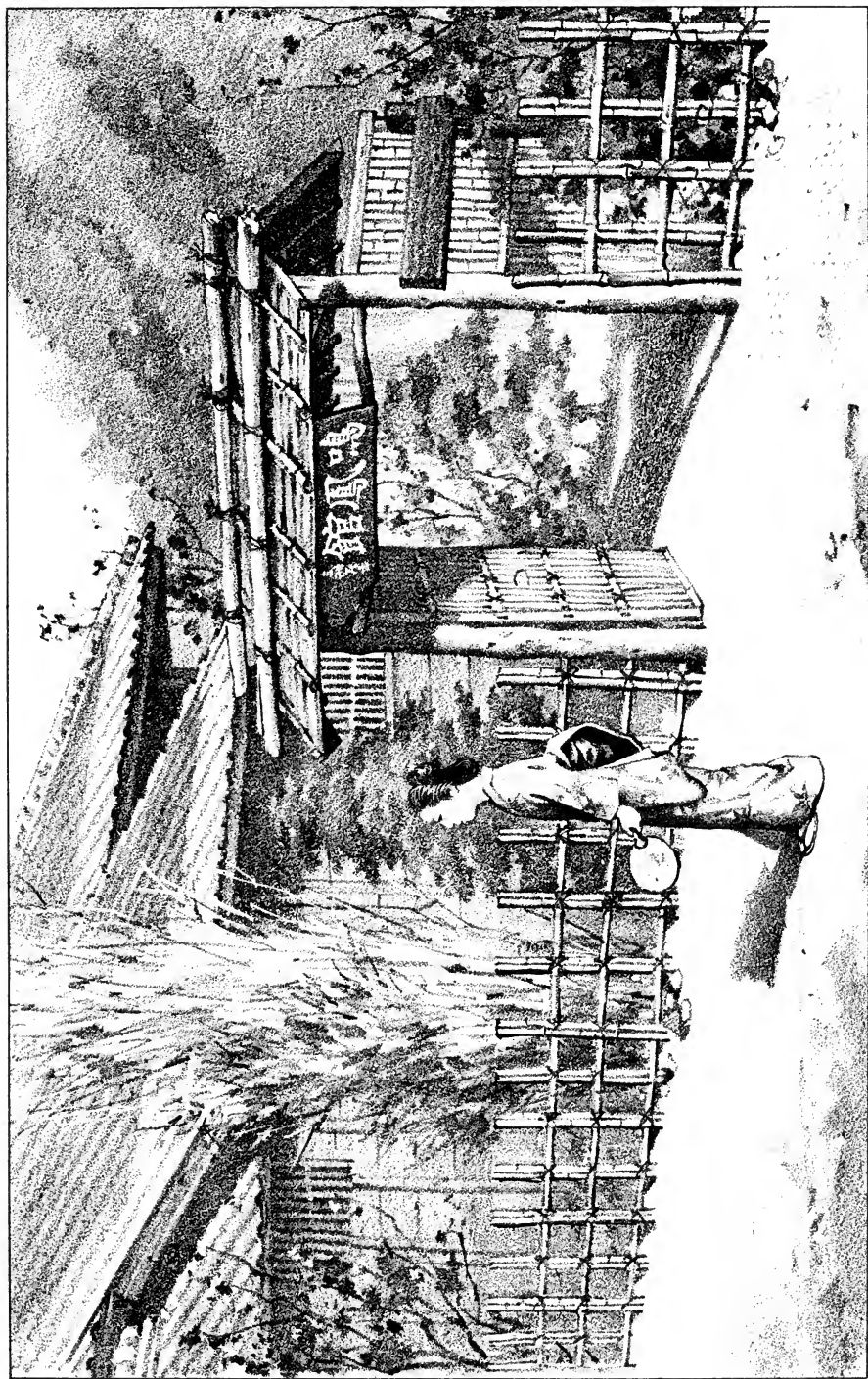
In the suburban districts of large cities or near the ruins of abandoned castles in the Japan of to-day, one often observes numbers of neat little villas surrounded by high hedge-rows of Japonica, or of cedar always neatly trimmed and green throughout the year. In these somewhat retired settlements live a community who thus choose to isolate themselves from their fellows almost as a distinct class; the sections they thus occupy being generally known as “the Shizoku quarter.” The term “Shizoku” is applied to that class who a quarter of a century ago, during the feudal period of Japanese history, were known as “Samurai,” the two-sworded men of the military class who, like the Spartans of old, were trained from their youth in the arts of war, and the strength of whose manhood was entirely given to the use of arms. The Samurai is the Ivanhoe of Japanese romance, he is the knight-errant who figures in all tales of love, the faithful vassal who cleaves to his master with a devotion stronger than death, the brave warrior who counts his life not dearer than his honor, his name is a synonym in every Japanese mind for all that is hardy, brave, and true in their country's history. As a young enthusiast writes of this soldier-class under the ancient regime:—“Their spirit was the seed of our civilization.”

Free from taxation and with inherited property and functions the Samurai relied largely upon his sword for his prestige among men, so that this weapon became as necessary a part of his daily equipment as any other portion of his dress, which distinction gave rise to the popular adage of those days:—“The sword is the soul of the Samurai.”

It is not remarkable that from this class has come a large majority of the most intelligent, loyal, and immoveable of those who have decided for Christ in Japan. And as they gave sinew and muscle to their country when earthly warfare was alone thought of, it is to their lasting credit that they have in these days been the most efficient leaders of their people when spiritual affairs are those of most commanding importance to the Empire of Japan. As a matter of fact the Christian Missionary must own an appreciative sympathy with the Japanese proverb which says:—"The cherry blossom is the king of flowers, the Samurai the king of men."

In presenting what is known of Kase Etsuki, it is humbly hoped that justice may be done in part to this old warrior-class, to which he belonged and which has played such an active part in introducing and helping to propagate the seeds of truth among the people.

The subject of this sketch was born about the year 1837, in the prefecture of Gifu and the province of Mino. He was of good Samurai rank, his father serving at the time as a retainer of the Daimyō, Baba Chikuzen. From his youth Kase Etsuki showed a marked inclination for learning, and this stood him in good stead in later life, as will presently be shown. From the first, too, he was keenly alive to the interests of his lord, and he thus by easy degrees rose to the first rank among his vassals. In the days when men were valued chiefly, if not entirely, for their military prowess, he excelled in the arts of fencing, riding, and the other accomplishments which distinguished a warrior of olden time. Especially was he a master in the use of the bow and in trials of skill, the accuracy with which his aim sent the arrow to the target was a forecast of the power he would have, when, in his declining years, he should be engaged in a more difficult kind of warfare. As a young man of promise he was, when only sixteen years of age, assigned to an apprenticeship in Tōkyō under the keeper of his Daimyō's wardrobe. His father died the following year and his mother three years afterwards, both with the comforting assurance that their son had already attracted the notice of those who had the bestowment of favors and that, under the then-existing régime, he was in the way of rapid promotion. When about twenty-eight years of age, he had the good fortune to secure as his wife the



“He secured as his wife the daughter of a neighbouring *Samurai*.”



daughter of a Samurai in the service of a neighboring Daimyō, and the next year she shared with him in his joy when he was promoted to the first rank among the deputy-officers who superintended the affairs of his master's estate.

In the winter of this year, that is about 1865, a rebellion broke out among the farming classes who paid tribute to his fendal lord, and, although the rebels came against the castle with a formidable array of weapons, their spears being improvised of bamboo and their shields made of straw, Kase Etsuki succeeded in treating with them so cleverly that a settlement of the difficulty was secured without bloodshed. From this circumstance he rose considerably in the confidence of all, as one who had evidenced well his capacity to carry out the trusts which had been committed to him.

In those days it was always customary to commit the custody of the castle each year to one responsible Samurai, and he thus becoming a man of prominence would, of course, be the recipient of many presents and fees of various kinds from farmers and others, which he was supposed to transmit to the lord of the castle. Many maintained that Etsuki was very foolish because he would not appropriate such fees and thus enrich himself, as did others. His characteristic reply was "I would rather remain a poor man at peace with myself than thrive upon ill-gotten gains."

This brief recital of the course of his life up to this point will enable us to form a fair estimate of this very promising young Samurai. None, we may suppose, walked prouder than he among his fellows, none more ready to rush to the front at the call to arms, none more to be relied upon in emergencies, and when swift destruction seemed to be threatening the interests of his Daimyō, Kase Etsuki knew his place in the ranks of those who were foremost in their defence.

Always ready in peace and war, he soon gained the admiration and esteem of all who took a serious view of life, winning for himself, among those of his rank, a position honorable in every respect. He was fully in harmony with the spirit of his age, was war-loving, and yet, when occasion required, would be as gentle and kind as a woman. He was above mean trickeries and low deceptions, loyal, brave, honest, simple, never feeling so much at home

as when accoutred for battle and marching with measured step among the faithful retainers of his lord.

Fortune seemed to smile upon him at this time; and young, active, ready, with hand and heart for all crises, the life of the feudal period was entirely congenial to his nature and temperament.

The castle of Baba Chikuzen must have stood many a siege in those old days, and the peculiar strength of such structures is shown from the fact that the neighboring castle of Ōgaki, now about six hundred years old, still stands proudly and only slightly mutilated, a land-mark in history dividing past and present. And yet the old castle-town of Ōgaki was the centre of the terrible earthquake convulsions of 1891, and no pen can describe the desolation wrought by this catastrophe coupled with a fearful fire which raged furiously at the same time. During the period of the shocks even strong buildings of foreign architecture were laid level with the ground, great fissures opened in all directions, rivers were turned from their courses, and for miles in either direction the railway track was torn and twisted as though by the hand of some infuriated monster. Above the blackened remains of that once populous city nothing was left worth describing after nature had finished her work of destruction but the proud old castle of Ōgaki. We may mention too, that the more distant city of Nagoya passed through a period of desolation and woe at this time from the same earthquake disturbance and that the enormous loss of property and life would be impossible to describe, and yet the majestic castle of Nagoya with its gables crowned by dolphin made of plated gold and containing many treasures and relics of a by-gone age, is still the admiration and wonder of all beholders.

It is also interesting here to recall that the country of Mino where was situated the castle of Baba Chikuzen was, from its near proximity to Kyōto, the capital of old Japan, one of the famous battle-grounds of the feudal era, and was of necessity the theatre of some of the bloodiest struggles when the Emperor, hitherto a captive in Kyōto, contended for his rights with the Shōgun who held the reins of government with Tōkyō as his centre of usurpation. Let us not then think it strange that nothing remains at this time to mark the castle of Kase's master but the gateway of the outer



Kase Etsuki during the Feudal Period.

To Mr. J. B. Allen
Albany, N. Y.

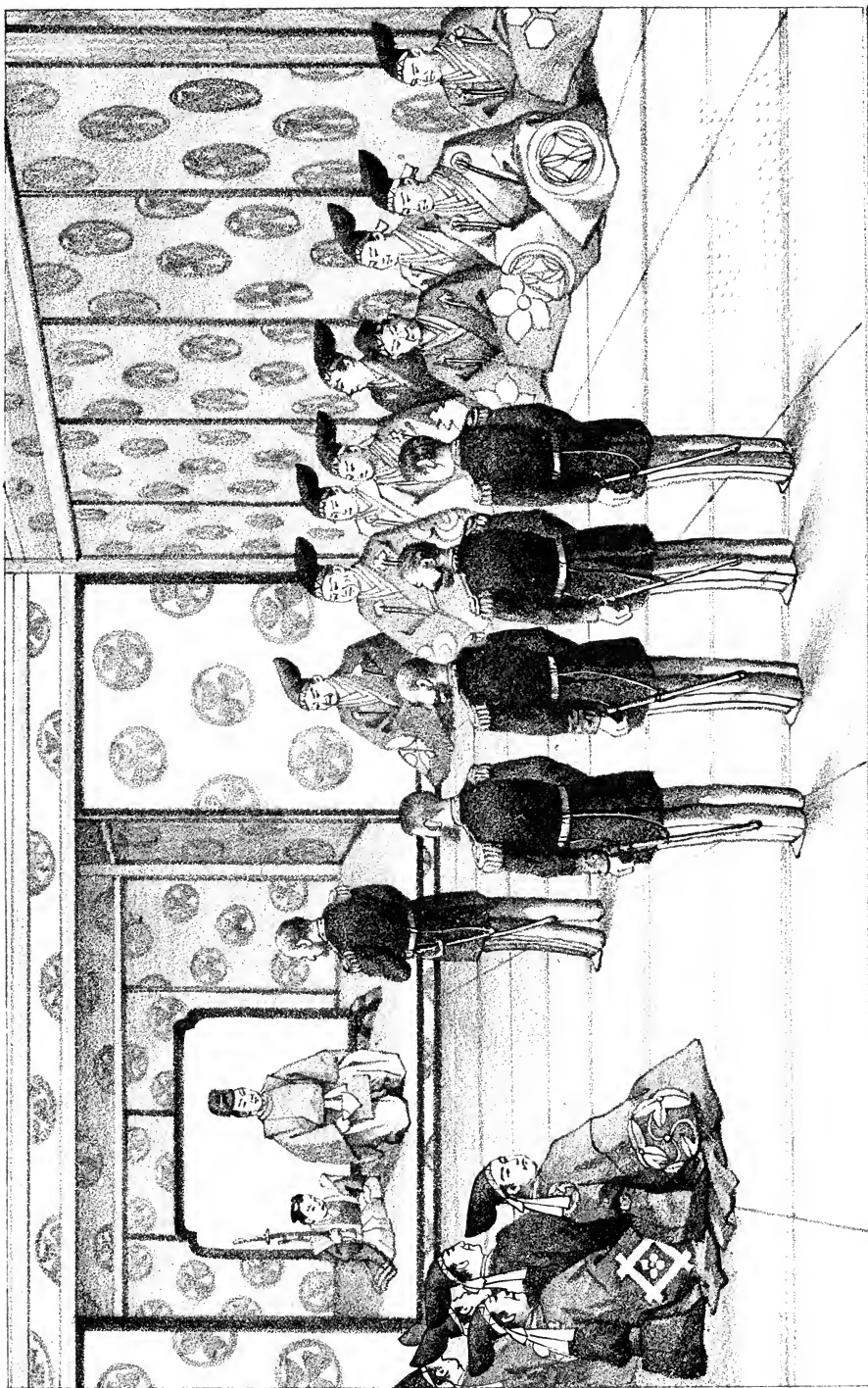
keep, yet in those old days the heart of Kase Etsuki was held within that stronghold as with lock and key, and he looked with honest pride upon its every stone. A proud day was it for him when word came that his lord had spoken of him as a faithful one, and he regarded with truthful reverence every member of that lordly house. We can imagine, too, that the young heir-apparent must have possessed this retainer's affection in no ordinary degree, and he must have rejoiced with others when a tale was related of some childish saying or some deed of prowess which enabled those loyal vassals to predict his capability to become the successor of his honored father.

It must have been a source of no little grief to the retainers of Baba Chikuzen's castle that, by the custom which prevailed in the time of the Shōgunate, the masters of smaller fiefs chose to reside continuously in Tōkyō, and did not, like Daimyōs with large incomes and many vassals, divide the year between their manorial castles and their fine residences in the capital city of the Shōgunate.

So it was that Etsuki only had occasional opportunities of joining the retinue which surrounded this feudal lord as he made his progresses in the city of Tōkyō. In those good old days much display was made by all Daimyōs, especially while residing in the great metropolis of the Shōgunate, and during parts of the year the streets were gay with the rival processions of the representatives of greater or less conspicuous houses. During certain seasons about three hundred of these feudal lords of various ranks and degrees fixed their residence in Tōkyō, and when they had occasion to appear in the streets, they loved to show their power by the size and magnificence of the cortège which followed them. At such times great anxiety prevailed as to which of two processions should take the lead, both being upon the same street and going in the same direction. The crucial point was reached when, at the entrance of a street, two such pageants met, in which case the usage prevailed that the Daimyō whose retainers were in the lead should take precedence of the other, irrespective of their relative rank or social standing. If at such crises the smaller Daimyō could gain the right of way, we can imagine the chagrin of his greater rival at being obliged to wait while the small band of retainers passed triumphantly ahead with their master, after which he must follow in the rear with his attendance of some five hundred or more richly-

dressed vassals. The Daimyō Baba Chikuzen was, owing to the property qualifications of the period, only entitled to a following of about twenty Samurai, but none the less would it have been his pride to ruffle the feathers of some pompous lord whom he could take at a disadvantage in no other way than by these clever street manœuvres, and so we may believe he valued greatly all such opportunities and strove not to be despised, and if Kase Etsuki happened to be present on such memorable occasions, we may be sure he would have taken great pains to show in manner, dress and bearing of what stuff he was made and that he would have made a conspicuous effort to reflect some of the dignity of him whose vassal he was.

Or let us call up before our mind's eye another picture from this now almost-forgotten past, borrowing our description from a popular novelist of Japan. Our gaze is fixed upon a young Samurai, threading the streets of Tōkyō with an air of consequence which even passers in the street unconsciously recognize. He has a bright, intelligent face, a quick, vivacious expression in his eyes, a cue tightly bound up, a light, bounding step and a well-knit frame, indicative of strength and endurance. His well-fitting coat, handsome trowsers and leather-soled sandals all lend an air of dignity and of importance to his appearance. A man, evidently an attendant of inferior rank, follows at a respectful distance. He is dressed in a blue coat with striped sash, and he wears a wooden sword, with brass fastenings. In these two men we have Kase Etsuki in the feudal period, followed by his servant.



The Shogun receiving the Embassy from the West.

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CHAPTER II.

“Gone is the barrier, the warriors gone,
That stood 'neath busy Fuwa's rustic eaves:
No one is left but the keen wind alone,
Blust'ring and scattering autumnal leaves.”

Confucius stood one day upon the bank of a river pensively watching its ceaseless flow, and, the story goes, he thus gave expression to the thought which agitated his mind. “It may be that the impermanent is thus: day and night it pauses not.” In this changeful, fleeting world they who have not the capacity of adaptation to circumstances must be carried along helplessly down the relentless stream of time. In the memorable year of 1854 the empire of Japan was startled by the news that eight ships of war carrying large numbers of the hated foreigners, who had been driven from the country in a religious persecution nearly three centuries before, had cast anchor in Yedo Bay. The country was roused to a high pitch of excitement over this event, and still more were the people of Japan startled by the news, which spread from district to district, that negotiations were pending between the Shōgun and the embassy from the west. The indignation over this was increased when it was known that, in defiance of imperial edicts excluding the foreigner, the Shōgun had signed treaty papers with America and the great European powers, thus opening certain ports of Japan to the nations of the earth.

From this time, wiseacres began to shake their heads ominously, prophets of evil arose proclaiming the dissolution of all things, and indistinct mutterings with now and then slight collisions on the street between progressives and radicals, plainly foreshadowed the coming storm which was to end in the overthrow of the Shōgunate. In many hearts the hidden fires of fanaticism and of hate now began to smoulder, and the opportunity was only wanting, when fanned by

a storm of popular fury, they should burst into flame. The growing discontent in the country and the dislike of the foreigner found vent in a cry alarming in its nature to the then-settled order of things—that cry was “Honor the Mikado and drive out the hated barbarian.”

A great and exciting cause which hastened the abolition of the feudal system was the growing power of leaders of internal factions who were jealous of the reigning house. Conspicuous among these disaffected retainers were the lords of the Satsuma and Chōshu clans, both of which had immense influence, hating each other no less than the Shōgun himself. So gradually a war-cloud, small indeed at first, began to widen and darken until it was plainly seen that the political sky was overcast and that a great and universal storm was imminent. Questionings more and more began to arise in the minds of men—this feudal system could not last, was it right that the Shōgun should hold the sovereignty of Japan with the true sovereign as his prisoner. News now came pouring in day by day of a most alarming character. It was known that seven of the most influential of the nobility, including Princes Sanjō and Iwakura, had escaped from Kyōto in disguise and under cover of night and that these men had erected the standard of revolt against the Shōgun in the district of Chōshu. Matters grew worse and worse until the Shōgun found himself becoming actually estranged from those upon whom he had most depended, and it became evident that the most powerful factions were gathering their forces upon the side of the emperor, who had hitherto been but a tool in the hands of the Shōgun. Next an estrangement began to appear evident between the emperor and the Shōgun, as the Emperor’s Star rose in the ascendant, then finally the relations between the Emperor and the Shōgun were roughly broken.

Now it became evident that the Emperor was going to demand his ancient rights at the point of the sword, and the rival clans, many of them for private reasons espoused his cause and openly declared for him. These forces were daily increasing to a host, and the Shōgun, seeing all too late the vanity of resistance determined to hand over the government to the Emperor. But even this desperate expedient failed, the pressure on either side being too great. The war-cloud burst, it soon became apparent that feudalism was doomed, resistance was vain, Kase’s master went down with the rest, his castle



Princes Sanjo, Iwakura and others escape from Kyoto under cover of night.

was destroyed, his retainers thrown upon the cold charity of the world. Japan emerged from barbarism to civilization, from the dark ages to the present. The warlike Samurai must now become the peaceful citizen, they are forever separated from their Daimyōs and the rallying-places are broken up. The struggle for what was must be succeeded by the struggle for what is, and what is to be. A leaf in the page of history has been turned, and they of the feudal days must become a part of the new period to which the country had progressed, and to this point must we also advance with our hero. We can imagine how his first attitude of sullen defiance had changed as the war advanced to fiery zeal, how he fought long and desperately and with others around him exhausted all his ingenuity and experience in the strategy of ancient warfare. It was all in vain. The inexorable decree had gone forth as the fiat of the Almighty. Japan of the past must give place to Japan of the present, she must step forth from her long exclusion and take her place beside her sister nations in the march of civilization.

We can form a picture in our mind of Kase Etsuki as he came forth from that period of conflict—deprived of his rights, his weapons, his living, and told to adapt himself to the new condition of things, or die of want. A famous poem of old Japan reads thus in commenting upon the pathetic changes which come to man in the vicissitudes of life.

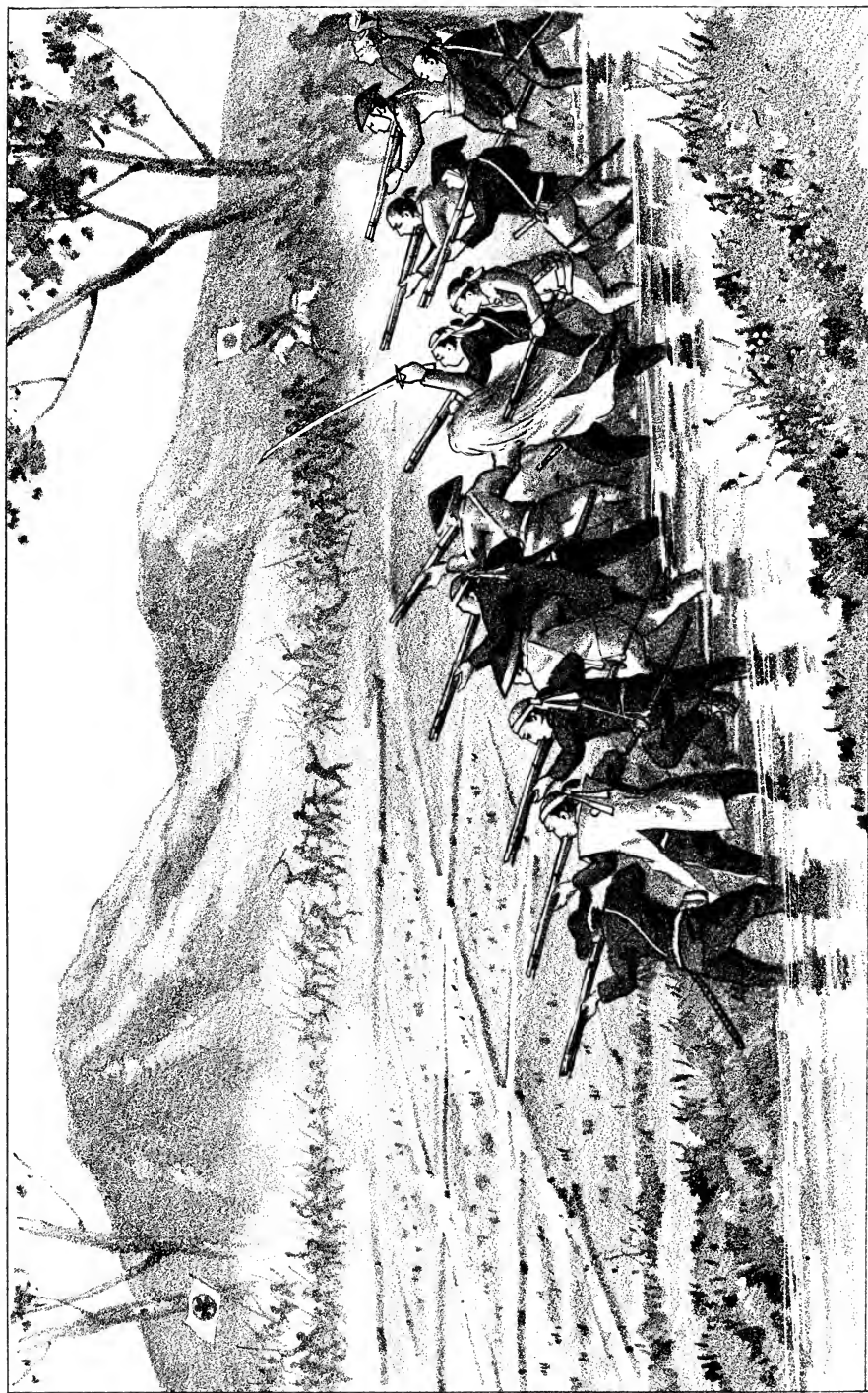
"To say it is a body made of dew
How very
False it is:
The life that vanishes.
With every breath."

Two stories illustrative of the character of the man we are considering come to us from this period. His biographer tells us that Kase Etsuki was chosen as one of a trusty band, especially deputed to protect the person of his Daimyō on his return from Tōkyō to his domain. During this period foes haunted the roads on every side, and so especial coolness and courage was needed. So it was fortunate that such a tried and tested man as this Samurai was put in command. He, by a series of skilful and daring adventures managed to elude public vigilance, and we are told how

at one place his master was borne across a river in an ordinary wooden-tub carried by his retainers, at another place trees were thrown across a river to form a bridge, and so, concealing themselves sometimes in mountains and making all despatch where the roads were clear, the party at last reached the castle, all through the undaunted spirit of their bold leader, Kase Etsuki.

At this time an event happened of tremendous import to all connected with the ill-fated Shōgun, Tokugawa Keiki, who has outlived his day of greatness and now spends his time in retirement in the city of Shizuoka, Japan. Negotiations had rapidly advanced between the imperial party in Kyōto and the Shōgun, who was then residing in his castle at Ōsaka, and affairs having reached an important crisis, the Shōgun was requested to repair to Kyōto where he was to have an audience with the Emperor. As the juncture was an exceedingly critical one, the Shōgun travelled in great state and strongly guarded to the capital city of Japan. By one of those unfortunate mishaps, so common in troublous times, the neighboring castles which still favored the Shōgunate suspecting treachery poured their retainers into and around the city of Kyōto, which was also well filled with the dangerous Chōshu and Satsuma soldiers. There being much intense hate at this time on either side, it was hardly to be expected that so many beings inimical in their relations should be armed and yet near each other without an outbreak. And so it happened that when the party conducting the Shōgun, which had now swelled to a small army, reached Fushimi, a village at a distance of about three miles from Kyōto, the imperial forces could not be controlled and so a terrible battle took place resulting in the complete rout and confusion of the retainers of the Shōgun. After the battle, and in the disorder which prevailed the Shōgun made good his escape and did not stop his flight until he found refuge in a temple in Uyeno park in the city of Tōkyō, from which he sent terms of capitulation to the Emperor in Kyōto offering to deliver up the stronghold of the Shōgunate, the great castle in Tōkyō which for three hundred years had been the seat of government of that powerful warrior despotism.

Kase Etsuki's master now found himself with others who had been engaged with the Shōgun's forces at Fushimi under proscription as traitors who could not be saved from destruction. Such a



The battle of Fushimi.



thing had never been overlooked in Japan as that any one who had directed his arms against the sacred and inviolable person of his imperial majesty could afterwards escape with his life. The Daimyō Baba Chikuzen had one trusted retainer only to whom he could entrust the delicate mission of suing for pardon after so great an offence. Upon whom could his choice fall but upon Etsuki, and the confidence was not misplaced, as, by the use of great diplomacy he succeeded at last in making terms for his master with Prince Iwakura, then chief of the council of war in session at Kyōto. We may imagine the sense of satisfaction with which Etsuki brought back news of the pardon to his anxious master, and next having accompanied his lord to Kyōto to pay fealty to his sovereign, to receive the royal pardon and the right to be enrolled as a citizen of the restored monarchy, the scene closes upon him in this period.

And now the prospects of the Shōgunate having been shattered, feudalism abolished, the landed estates of the Daimyōs confiscated, the purlieus of their castles destroyed, these feudal lords were henceforth obliged to live in Tōkyō, as a pledge of future loyalty to their imperial master whose capital city was thenceforth to become Tōkyō. Through these trying times this faithful vassal must have been dazed, shaken, grieved, shocked by turns, and at last almost prostrated with sorrow and mortification. From the wife of this man we learn that about this time, following the example of many others, Kase Etsuki tried to commit suicide to show his desperation over his master's fallen fortunes, and that a watch was set upon him to prevent this deed. A well-rendered translation of a beautiful Japanese poem reads thus:

“As years pass by, and I turn to scan
The bridge of life with its thin, weak span;
Ah me! how perilous seems the road
That I with my careless steps have trod.”

CHAPTER III.

"In my error
I began to take
My shadow for myself
My real self
I quite forgot."

By the decree of heaven Kase Etsuki was not to share in the fortunes of his master, but must henceforth pick his way alone through the changes and chances of this troublesome world. Like a caged heron he must now suit himself to circumstances to which he was little adapted, and under which his spirit must have sorely chafed.

Over and over again must he have sat over his hibachi* and regaled his guests with "tales of old deeds and savage wars," and often and often must he have avowed with flushed cheeks his wish to return to his life by the side of his old master and near the castle he regarded with so much pride. And when on the recurrence of festivals he turned out with his fellow-villagers to vie in deeds of arms, it was found that Kase Etsuki's arm had lost none of its cunning, but as of old, his arrow found the bull's eye and occupied a solitary place which the most skilled could not reach. On such days men would wonder at this man. It was then seen that he was really a creature in the midst of change and that only adverse circumstances kept him cramped in means. We must not be surprised that Kase Etsuki's subsequent history reminds us forcibly of the proverb of the rolling stone, when the fact is called to mind that in the unsettled times ensuing upon the Restoration of the Empire, these men of the Samurai class were thrown upon the world to the number of about four hundred and fifty thousand. So far as regarded the practical affairs of ordinary life they were as inexpert as children, so that in the pressure following upon the abolition of the military age, it was only by strong exertion

* Charcoal brazier.



Kase Etsuki Narrating his Past Experiences.

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and more than usual enterprise that they could maintain the respectable position they had hitherto held among men. Owing to this great social convulsion it is at this time a well-known fact that in parts of Japan those who once called few men their superiors are now glad to eke out a living as jinrikisha-men, or are following trades and callings equally as menial and precarious. What else was to be expected when a reverse such as this occurred in the history of a class of persons of whom we have the following account from a well-known writer. "The Samurai's idea of honor forbade him to embark in any occupation which was associated with money-making, and led him to look down with contempt on the artisan and especially on the shop-keeping class, though he might engage in agriculture.—The duties of the great mass of the Samurai class consisted in serving as soldiers in time of war, and in peace in keeping guard over the dwelling of their lord, forming part of his retinue, and appearing upon festive occasions in ceremonial dress." As this memoir is intended to give the actual facts in the history of one person of this class, no attempt is made to conceal the vacillating spirit with which he met the change, and yet one can see through it all that he was one ready to confront adversity with a courageous heart.

"When all the blandishments of life
are gone,
The coward sneaks to death, the brave
live on."

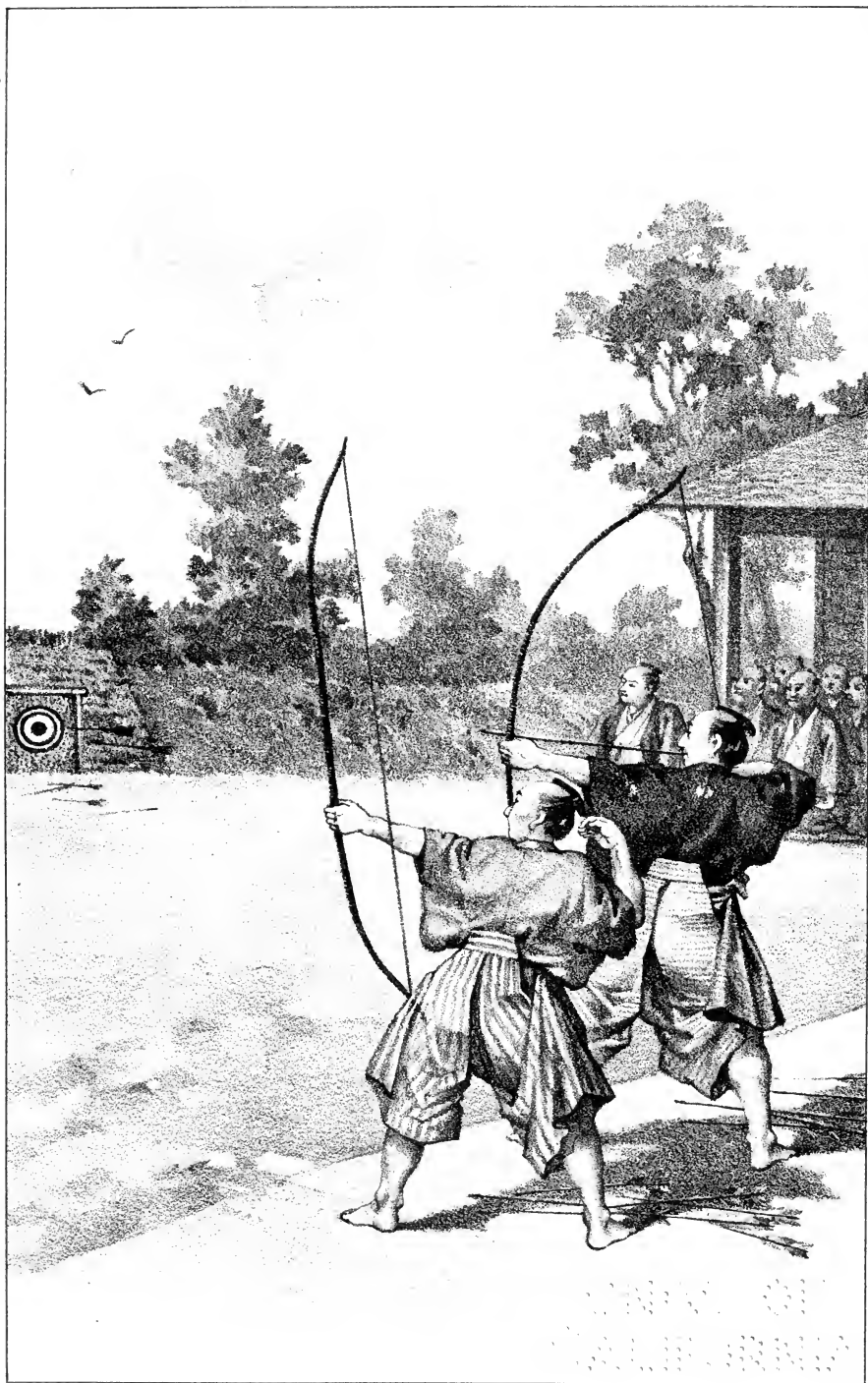
Etsuki had once loved learning for learning's sake, and it only seemed natural that one who had sought her friendship in times of good fortune should become her protégé when he needed substantial aid. A school for boys having been established in his native village his first settled occupation after the Restoration became that of teaching, but this position he shortly after resigned to become the mayor of his village. His restless spirit had not, however, been trained to the confined and sedentary life which such official duties entailed, so having relinquished this office after a few months he began casting anxious looks in other directions for some new way of making a living. So we next find him engaged in the Post and Telegraph Department as an agent for the supplies needed in

that service, and this enabled him to lead an active life, as he was obliged to travel much, and had enough of business responsibility to keep both mind and body constantly on the alert. It need not, however, surprise us to find him later on employed in business as agent of the garrison in the city of Sendai, in northern Japan, and then after various changes he again returned to his first employment of teaching school. Shortly before this last engagement he had returned to his native province of Mino, and the warm welcome he then received at the hands of his countrymen showed that the memory of his past services as a Samurai had not yet faded from their minds. He was honored by the choice of his prefecture to membership in its council, but he immediately declined the election, and soon the memories which crowded upon him in the haunts of his former life proving sad and irksome he sought a change of ideas elsewhere. How could the sight of that well-known moat, the ruined battlements, the overgrown and neglected pleasure-garden of his loved master with its lotus' pond and rustic bridges, looking now so sad and woful in their desolation, the very spot where he had lived in his palmiest days—how could it be anything but painful to that faithful heart!

So from one thing to another Kase Etsuki drifted, like a ship without mast or rudder, his ability always recognized, but certainly leading a purposeless life and evidently not prospering. Could those words of the poet be true he must have thought

“With the passing world,
As with a passing world,
Do not trifle
The passing world
Is all the world you have.”

In these years he found his wife an unchanging friend and wise counsellor, loving, sensible, cheerful, ingenious, she did what she could to help him bear his uncongenial surroundings, and tried where she could to remove the sense of ennui which came over him so frequently in his changing life. It was evident, however, that the warrior with his taste and prejudices whetted and trained in other directions could not settle down easily to a life of regular routine.



The Archery Club.

TO THE
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CONGRESS

Having after this moved to the city of Tōkyō he had taken up the business of a merchant, but as little was he suited to this as is the tropical plant to arctic snows. He was not made of the stuff that loves to barter and change; he did not value money and was too generous to keep it; he was proud and could not consort easily with those of a baser sort; he had known the day when, as a Samurai, he despised trade and looked upon such classes with a contemptuous eye. He felt abased in becoming a merchant and yet he knew no other resource; his whole nature revolted against tricks of trade, and his known reputation for integrity and his inexperience made him an easy prey to all who had a single eye to the main chance. So we find him at last retiring from business, and, as though he would bury all recollection of the disgust he had felt in this mercantile venture, he next sought occupation in the silk districts and threw himself with spirit into the silk culture. Here he attained such success that he was elected to an important office in a silk company and here he maintained himself for some time, showing during the time of his connection with this company a spirit of so much fairness in all his dealings that he was looked upon as an example to all for honesty in an avocation in which few shine conspicuously for this virtue.

His wife recalled this period with a bright smile when repeating after Etsuki's death incidents from their married life. She said she particularly loved to dwell upon it, for during this time her own talents and experience came into demand, as in silk culture women are always enabled to give very substantial help.

CHAPTER IV.

“Mark how the golden spring flower blends
With golden sprays in the lake below :
Where truth begins, where shadow ends
Who can know ?”

Etsuki was not one of those upon whom the moral teachings of the great sages could be lost, and as learning had been dear to him from an early day, it is not likely he would have esteemed lightly those portions which come to the Japanese from the sources of greatest moral and mental profit. From childhood he reverently imbibed the precepts and doctrines of Confucius, and had found by experience that this great teacher had much to tell which was true and wise. He had early in life discerned the meaning and beauty of the five-fold relationship which man should aim to follow, viz : the relationship of parent and child, master and servant, husband and wife, friendship, and brotherhood, and the meaning of the terse Japanese proverb which says “ron yori shōko,” “proof is better than argument” was not lost upon him.

Buddhism, too, had from early life lifted her warning finger and pointed him to the road where conscience leads the way, and Shintoism, so far as it teaches men to revere the memory of the great departed heroes of one's country was not unattractive to him. From an early period he had given earnest heed to the warning voices about him, and had followed steadily, though oftentimes hesitatingly, in the pathway of virtue and truth. Many times he must have deplored the shape which Buddhism had assumed, and having deeply thought upon the subject, although he was himself of the Buddhist persuasion, could he have failed to wonder at the huge structure of deceit and superstition which had grown and accumulated with changes of times and people since Shakya first preached in India? As, too, the really eminent teachers among



Kase Etsuki as a School Teacher at the Age of 36.

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the Buddhist priesthood belonged to a by-gone age, he had none about him who, either by word or example, were capable of becoming his instructors. Indeed, had not Etsuki been a man of pure feeling and an earnest searcher for truth, we cannot doubt that, like many another in the Japan of to-day, he would have revolted against and have thrown aside the moral teachings of the Buddha, when he thought of them in connection with the degrading idolatry and polytheism about him. Yet he could not deny himself the satisfaction of searching and studying out the moral beauty and deep thought which lies hidden away in the real teachings of the great Shakya. He may have met in the course of his reading or sometimes his ear may have caught from the lips of some learned Buddhist priest, whose honesty of heart overbore the necessity of preaching imposture, such mystifying strains as these, addressed to the devout:—"The heart itself is Buddha" we must not enquire for Buddha in other directions." The heart itself is the law:—What other law should we search after besides? Men of superior wisdom realize this as soon as they hear the word, and all their doubts speedily cease—stupid persons, though they hear such things do not at once believe. Thinking that they can only attain to Buddhahood by a lengthy accumulation of merit through penance and mortification, they invoke Buddha morning and evening, read the sutras, practice the rites of incense-burning, prostrations, flower scattering, processions; or else of alms-giving, observance of the commandments, humiliation and fasting; while those whose foolishness is most extreme perform such absolute mortification as leaving off eating, giving up salt, severing their arms at the elbow, cutting off their fingers, abstaining from speaking, or going about naked. This is simply to be unconscious of the fact that one should attain to enlightenment at once in this life, and it is to beg solely for the attainment of Buddhahood in the next. If a man has a heart which thus places Buddhism at a distance, he will never reach the true way; for although he should perform ever such mortifications of casting away body, life, and wealth, they will all be perverted devotion appertaining to the world of sense." Inquiry having been thus aroused the conclusion must have forced itself upon Etsuki that when freed from all subtleties of expression, the true meaning of the delusive language used to impress the uninitiated is indeed that "heart itself is Buddha," and that its

motions towards either good or evil when followed, make in every man either a paradise or a hell. His faith having resolved itself at last into this simple creed, it is no wonder that his superstitious and idolatrous neighbors were no little surprised and shocked to hear him speak often of yearnings within which the worship of images could not satisfy.

Though not a composer of verse, Kase Etsuki had a keen appreciation of the compositions in which those of the old days loved to clothe their thought, and he paid much attention to the cultivation of flowers, a form of recreation in Japan.

His was a nature which responded to all the gentler emotions of nature, poetry, and art. Like all deep-souled natures he loved solitude, and in lonely spots he would often stand enjoying the enchanting scenery in which his beautiful country abounds. The pretty little arbors with their straw-thatched roofs which so gracefully dot every Japanese landscape were for him favorite places of resort. It was noticed how often he went alone to these and if he found he had been forestalled by others he would sit apart from them, as though preferring the sights and sounds of nature unmixed with the harsh cries of men inflamed with sake. Sake! the curse of all Japanese life from the highest official to the lowest coolie—that which meets the infant newly born into the world at the family festival of rejoicing—the necessary adjunct of every important event and crisis of life—which degrades the wedding festivities, which presides as a dark spirit over the funeral obsequies, which literally plagues with its deadly blight many a life from the cradle to the grave. Even the gods which are thought to protect the family altar, are found to be beings which can only be propitiated by liberal offerings of sake, and when they have been well feasted, it is the custom to make distribution of the contents in the bottles of consecration. Yea! sadder still sake absolutely finds its way on occasions into the coffin of the one it has victimized in life, the friends of the dead putting in a bottle of sake by the side of the remains as though they would wish a lost soul to carry with him to the place of torment the evidences of its condemnation.

The roar of the waterfall, the moan of the forest pine, the gentle murmur of running water, the note of the nightingale, the plaintive cry of the wood-pigeon, all of these found a ready and



Kase Etsuki as a Merchant at the Age
of 41 taken with his Nephew.

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eager listener in this lover of nature. He loved to fall into those dreamy reveries which possess one as he stands under the stars and looks at the flickering lights in distant homesteads, and he always enjoyed the softened effects of moonlight upon land and water. He must have known that pretty conceit which makes the moon in each scattered drop of spray represent the principle of benevolence which runs throughout mankind

“ When the roaring water-fall
By the night storm is shivered,
The moon light is reflected
In each scattered drop.”

None of nature's many sermons were lost upon this devout soul, and it is not rash to believe that the thought of God was one familiar to him and with David he could say. “ Many, O Lord my God, are they wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us-ward.”

We are told by his wife that he went with faithful regularity to see the brilliant maple-leaves and the trees opening into blossom, and we may credit him with the fancy prevalent among the Japanese that a plum tree blossoming out amid the snows of winter, may be likened to a brave spirit which rises superior to adversity.

At such seasons when others found the sake bottle and the dancing girl essential to real enjoyment he, with genial good humor, would possibly say that different objects brought different persons to the same place—that for himself, he went only to see nature in her clothing of beauty and he did not care to put himself to shame before her. Nature, he would say, could tell to him her plain and beautiful story without either the sake-bottle or the samisen,* and often he would quote with feeling the Japanese verse

“ Looking at the blossoms,
Makes the heart beautiful.”

Let this suffice to show the inner history and disposition of Kase Etsuki up to this period of his life.

* Guitar.

CHAPTER V.

“ All the ground seemed frozen dead
Yet the blessed dew was shed,
And the lawn in living green
Bright with fresh young blades was seen.”

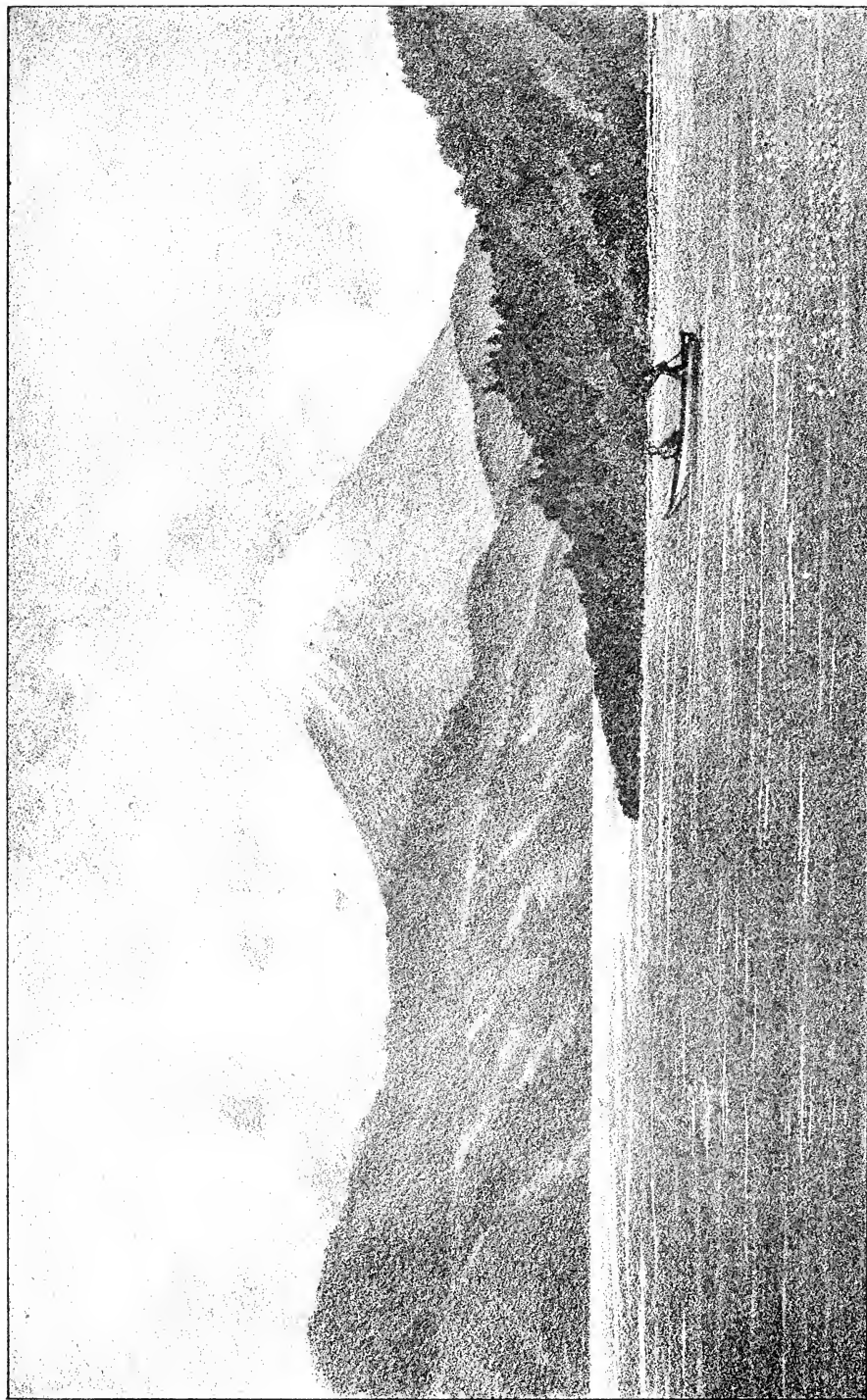
From what has been said, we feel we must not deny to Kase Etsuki a deeply religious nature. He only despised that which goes under the name of religion, while disregarding that for which the spiritual nature most craves, viz: a living, personal God. For this reason Buddhism was unsatisfying to him as a religion, and, although valuing many of its sayings, his spirit rebounded equally from the iron-bound secularism of Confucius and from the degenerate teaching of Shintoism.

Yet character and conscience had been too much a study with him to deny a hearing to those infinite yearnings within his soul, nor could he agree with the sentiment expressed in that witty verse which some teachers quoted :

“ Would'st thou God or Buddha honour
Honour first thy sire!
There's no God more honorable,
No nor Buddha higher.”

From adverse circumstances and other causes he had of late years been in that state of loneliness, and, at times, of desolation of spirit which leads men naturally to self-introspection, and, as a consequence, he had been led to believe there is a God, if man “ can only feel after Him and find Him.”

In the year 1867 at all public places and at almost every crossing in the streets and on the roadside, large notice-boards proclaimed to all passers, that the Christian religion was a corrupt sect strictly proscribed, and that all who were partial to its teachings



Fuji Yama from Lake Hakone.

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would be carefully watched and punished. This must have given to liberty-loving minds who believe in freedom of religious thought an impression of no little wonder that man should be fettered in his most secret thoughts. In some minds an eager desire must have been aroused to know more about any form of worship which could cause so great a stir, for certainly the existing religions hardly started a passing interest in many minds. We do not know how Etsuki was affected by these sign-boards. Certain it is that when, in the Providence of God, a Bible came into his keeping, it met all of the hitherto indefinable needs of his spiritual nature, and the saying of the master long centuries ago became verified. "He that doeth truth cometh to the light." A learned commentator has beautifully said that "earnest pursuit of holiness produces an immediate sympathy in the heart when Christ is seen, because one sees there an ideal realized, and also the possibility of realizing the same ideal. Every truly upright man rejoices to come in contact with Christ, the living embodiment of holiness, because the deepest impulse upon which he acts can thus come to the light."

This man had at last found the truth and he knew it—he only needed henceforth that his spirit should expand and enlarge as the facts and promises in the Gospel flowed into his hungering and thirsting soul. What need had he of the great and superabundant literature which the Higher and Lower schools of criticism are furnishing? He had the word and the promised Comforter to teach him the meaning, and that was sufficient. Again and again must he have thanked God that His word had come to him in the vernacular tongue, and it became his meat and drink because it ministered to the needs of his soul.

The now extinct volcano of Fuji "the peerless mountain" with its snow-capped peak is the ideal of beauty engraven upon the mind of every Japanese, yet sometimes even when near its base this mountain may be shrouded from view by heavy mists. God alone can lift those dense fogs and reveal to man the beautiful outlines of that pyramid of snow. Do men complain that they cannot see God? The only answer is, pray that God will remove those dark mists of sin or prejudice which obscure the beatific vision. The words of Jesus are true, though they do not seem to correspond with much of human experience. "Blessed are the pure in heart,

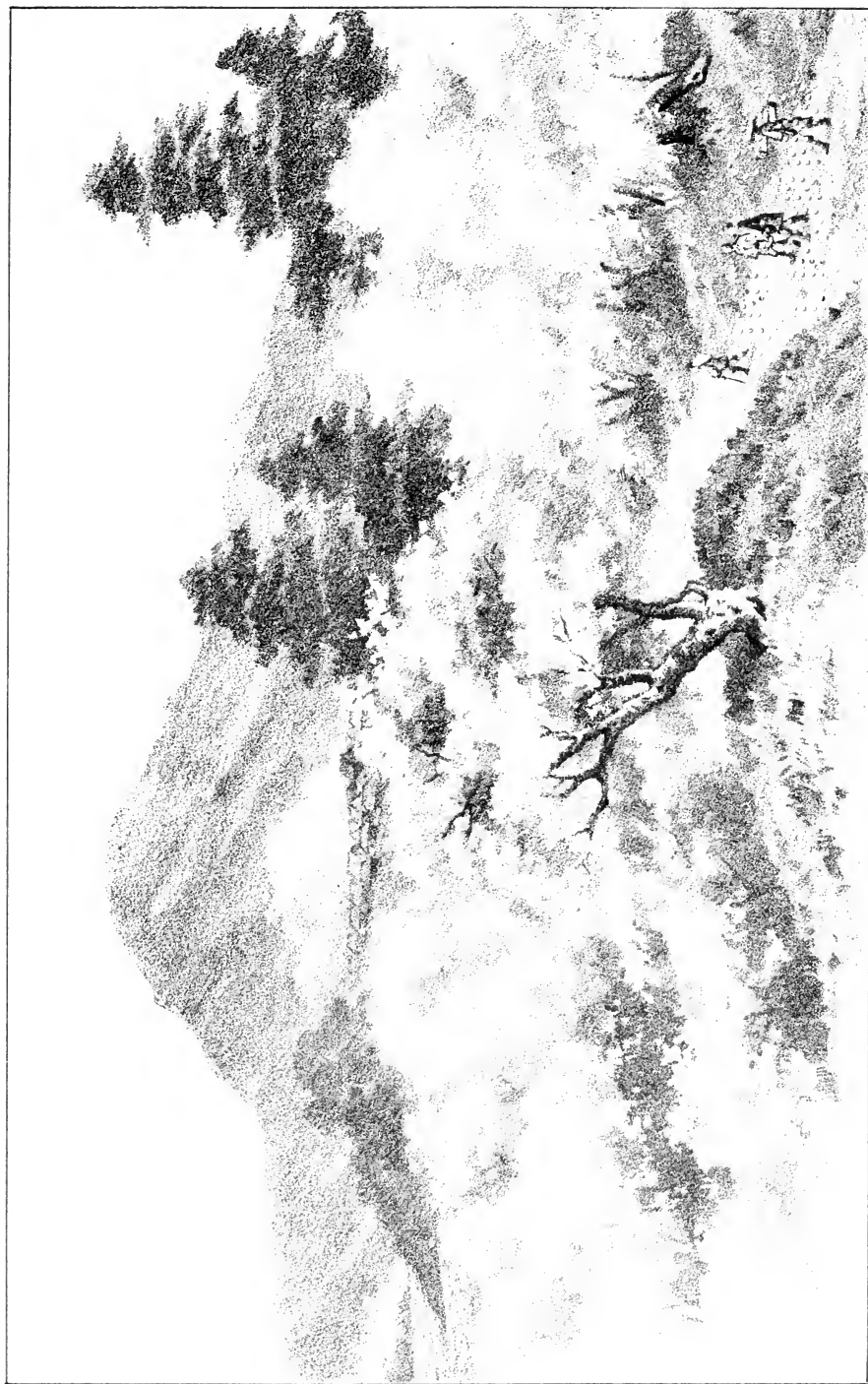
for they shall see God," and a Chinese proverb tells us this same truth, too, in other words:

"If one takes up clear water in his hand, he will see the reflection of the moon.

It may have been a desire for information about the truths of salvation which in May of 1889 brought Etsuki to Tōkyō, and while in Tōkyō he was so fortunate as to become acquainted with a missionary of the Church of England. From him he learned enough to supplement that which was wanting in his knowledge of God and his great love for sinful man.

It only needs a short interval for the tree to burst forth into leaf after the juices have run up into the trunk. The ground had been already prepared, so the seed had taken root from the start, and henceforth "neither height, nor depth, nor death, nor life nor any other creature" would be able to separate Kase Etsuki from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Do not let us think it easy to declare one's self for Christ in a land like Japan. Under such circumstances the first formality oftentimes is to strike the name from the family list kept in the temple-register of the village—this would give rise to frequent visitations from the priest to the relations, when condolences would be offered on either side. Then would follow innumerable consultations when all the branches of the family, direct and collateral, would meet to draw up resolutions of condemnation against one who had deserted the worship of his ancestors and had taken up with a corrupt religious sect. All this would naturally be painful to a sensitive temperament, but in this case the seed had fallen into good ground and neither ridicule, sneers, nor estrangements could henceforward prevent its growth. When the love of God really takes possession of a human soul, the fear of public disfavor diminishes in inverse ratio to its intensity. We are told that "the spirit of man is the candle of the Lord," and when He the Almighty sets it aglow it burns with fire taken from off His altar and radiates everywhere the light which is fed by the oil of His anointing grace. So ripe a Christian did he soon become that he was admitted into the Church by the rite of baptism in the month of June, and in the month of July was confirmed by the Bishop of the Church of England in Japan.



Mount Yoshino.

Hitherto since the fall of the fortunes of his Daimyō the life of Kase Etsuki had seemed without a purpose. He had lived upon the food which past memories afforded him. True he loved his gentle wife and heartily disapproved of the sentiment expressed in those sad words, "there is no place for woman in the three worlds—past, present, and future"—and he must have deplored the lot to which many of his countrywomen are consigned through mistaking their true position. Still his strong man's heart had many times longed for one upon whom he could lean as of old, who could replace in his affections all he had lost when service to his master had been removed from his life, whom he could regard with a proper sense of pride, to whom he could give proofs of his heart's affection.

As the revelation of God reconciling the world unto Himself by the death of His Son gradually took possession of this man's soul, all the images of the past seemed to pall and diminish before the splendor of such a Being, and the thought of entering His service was almost a greater privilege than he could bring his mind to realize.

What was the Daimyō he had loved to the Maker and Ruler of heaven and earth? What were the resources of a small feudal tenure to the riches and treasures stored up in heaven? Had he once rejoiced over the infant prattle and puny deeds of the young scion of the house he had served, what was this compared to the life of the Son of God among men—what words of grace and truth proceeded out of His mouth, how transcendent the deeds of Him who controlled the issues of life and death.

As Kase read the Gospel story with the illumination vouchsafed to him through the Holy Ghost, he became henceforth a transformed being "Counting all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord." From this time forth his Bible was to become his constant companion, prayer his continual resource and relaxation, Jesus and His love for lost sinners his never-ending theme. His heart's affection twined itself about the truths of salvation, and he clung to them with a loyalty and intensity of which only such natures as his are capable.

Henceforth nothing came amiss, all which came to him whether of good or of evil was direct from the hand of God, and he deemed

it infinite joy to suffer for His sake if by any means he might thus show to others the deep reality of his love. He sought out opportunities of showing his perfect trust in and obedience to the will of God, to witness his faith in the atoning work of His Son. Jesus had said, as of old, "follow me," and Kase Etsuki "left all and followed Him."

CHAPTER VI.

“Oh! the mountain cherry trees at
Yoshino, that blossom each spring!
Cleaving the trees, look for the abode
Of the flowers.”

A legend tells us that a renowned Buddhist priest by the name of Ikkyu once, when upon a pilgrimage, passed a shrine, and that a grim-looking giant seven feet in height suddenly darted forth from the shadow of a dense wood near by and confronted the doughty priest with the question “How about Buddhism?” “It is in my breast,” was the quick reply. “Then I will cleave thy breast and look,” said the savage creature drawing a sword. Upon this, Ikkyu repeated the above lines without a tremor in his voice, upon hearing which the apparition vanished quickly.

Our Lord Jesus Christ took this same form of illustration when pressed by the Pharisees as to when the kingdom of heaven would appear. “Behold,” said he, “the kingdom of God is within you,” and one who afterwards imbibed the meaning of His words has added, “The kingdom of God must enter a man before he can hope to enter the kingdom of God.”

In February of the year 1891 we find Kase Etsuki teaching school in the village of Kanawagawa, near to the city of Fukushima, and this vocation he followed until he fell under the sickness which terminated his life. His longer term of service as a teacher of the young would seem to indicate that some new desire had been stirred within him apart from that of gaining a livelihood or of watching the growth of the mental faculties under his training. We cannot doubt that the idea of character-building was now predominantly in his mind, and that he had taken hold of Dr. Arnold's maxim. “I wish my pupils first to be Christians, second to be gentlemen, and third to be scholars.”

And now this brave man was about to enter upon the last stage of his eventful life.

While teaching school in this village he was made aware of certain internal troubles which proved upon examination to be of a cancerous nature. With no money he returned in September of 1892 to the city of Fukushima in order to be under medical treatment.

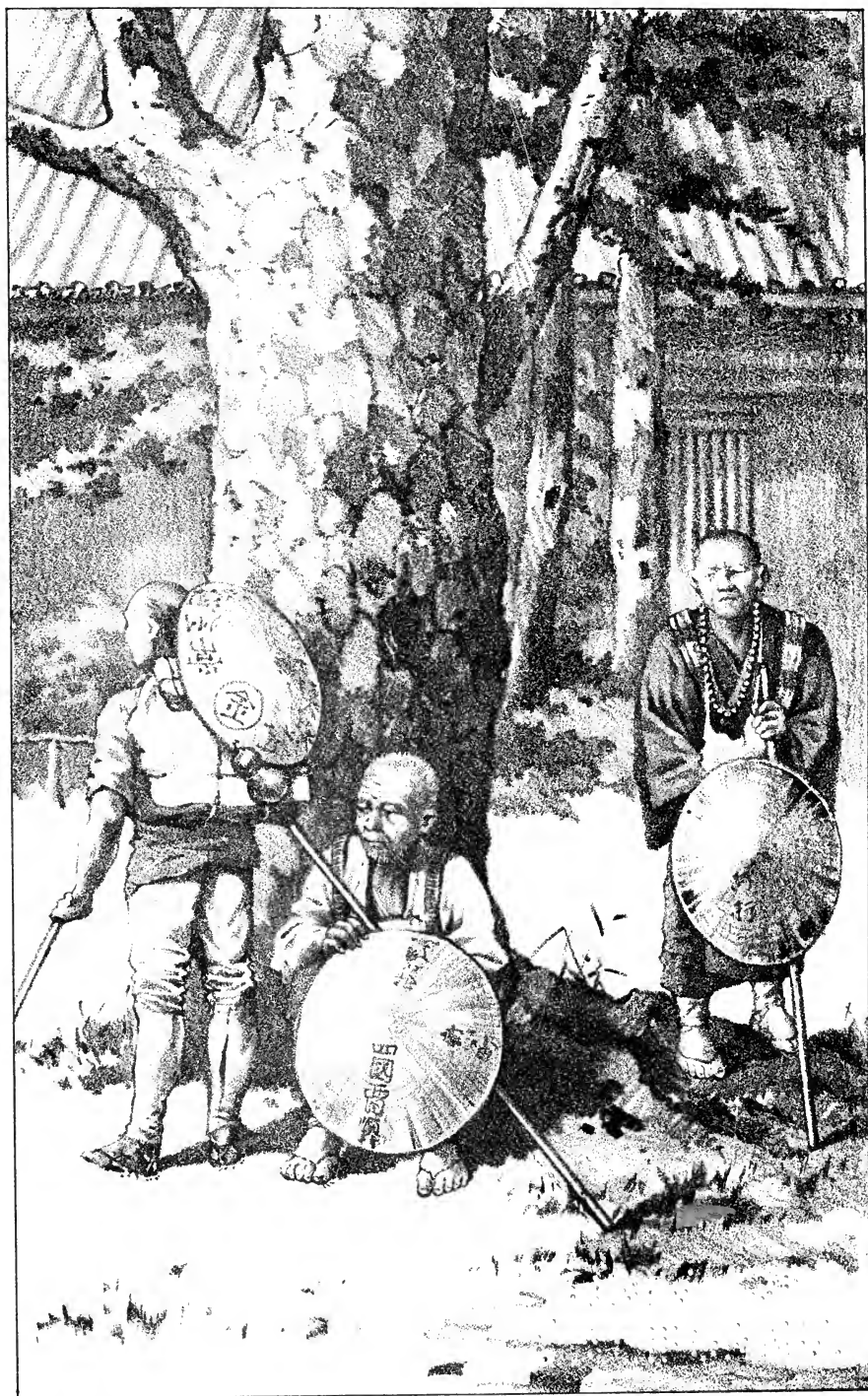
Since "the love of God had been shed abroad in his heart through the Holy Ghost," Kase had learned the great lesson of all life that "God is love" and that all things work together for good to them that love Him."

We may imagine that there did come a conflict in this brave man's heart when he knew the worst, but he soon ceased to murmur and always spoke with thankfulness of every event of his life—even of this—as coming direct from the Lord.

His disease having fully developed, he was in the summer of 1892 brought down to a bed of sickness and suffering from which he was to be released only by death. Before this afflicting stroke fell upon him he had, however, gone to several places where there were archery clubs, and had confounded all on-lookers by his wonderful skill with the bow. This must have providentially attracted to him the kind attentions of some skilful doctors who, themselves fond of manly sports, had naturally been drawn to one who far excelled all others. These men faithfully ministered to this man of God until his dying hour, taking no fees of any kind in return.

Many who had known Kase Etsuki in his past life and had noted the change which had come over him since he had attached himself to the cause of Jesus Christ must have wondered how he would bear this new visitation from the God he so much loved. These must have been surprised to note the cheerfulness and resignation with which he bore his sufferings.

To a mere worldling what could have been more desolate, more distasteful than the gloomy future which seemed to widen out before this man. He had known trouble, he had experienced great vicissitudes, he had lost his property, with some his popularity, but still he clung with pertinacity, nay even with enthusiasm, to that which was left him, his faith in God. This instead of becoming dimmed or growing faint, seemed now to glow with the fervor of gold which has been seven-times heated, and "all things he truly



A Group of Pilgrims.

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counted loss for Christ. Christ was the centre of his soul's aspirations, the ideal image of his humble adoration, his daily thought, his nightly dream, verily it might have been said he breathed Christ, he ate, he drank, he slept with no other thought, until by the very laws of association the name of Christ Jesus and the name of Kase Etsuki became so intermingled in the minds of men that to think of the servant was to think of his Master and Lord. It was henceforth no longer Kase Etsuki that lived, but "Christ who lived within him; and the life he now lived in the flesh, he lived by the faith of the Son of God who loved him and gave Himself for him."

People wondered at this man, many scoffed at one who could be so easily entrapped in the superstitious teachings of a foreign religion, who could live day by day pouring over that book which had been only a few years before prohibited by the government and its followers proscribed; who took no part in festivities of any kind into which sake drinking and like accompaniments entered; who lived a lonely life apart from conviviality and good cheer, and fed his mind upon thoughts of an unseen Deity, who gloried in the story of a Man long centuries ago crucified as a malefactor, and in the curious legends which had clustered about Him, who brooded over visions of a future life veiled as yet in mystery. Some there were who asked why he did not entirely abjure the world and become a hermit, why he did not at any rate satisfy his curious idiosyncrasy and at least worship something seen. If he loved to waste time in ponderings upon these "old wives' fables," why did he not worship in temples or make long pilgrimages to lonely shrines.

Some, too, were so much wedded to their own idols of various kinds that they began to hate this silent life which, without obtrusiveness or offensiveness of any kind, nevertheless made them feel their follies and hate their faults. Yet no one could deny that, though in this one particular Kase Etsuki might be a deluded man, he was in all things else a model of sobriety and common sense, that his private and public life was above reproach, and that he showed no evidence of melancholia, or other aberration of mind.

Yea, some would occasionally even listen to Kase, and when they did in seriousness it soon became proverbial that a noticeable

stillness would seem to steal over their spirits and for days thereafter they would be self-absorbed to a curious degree. It had even been known that one here and there had actually been so much impressed as to heed and follow, and so Kase had succeeded after much patient witnessing in gathering here and there little companies of those who believe—the seed germs of the future church of Christ in Japan.

CHAPTER VII.

“ All men seem to know of death
Yet of this, they truly do not know
Yet it is a law
That all must die.”

And now the closing scene in this drama of a life rises before us, tragic as all of human life is, yet in this instance filled with that indescribable peace and joy which can come from only one source. Kase Etsuki finds that he must now at last be called to glorify God in that most trying of all situations, as a confirmed invalid, without means of support. He here, however outlasted even the faith and patience of Job and, like men of faith in all time, that which had been his stay in health of body and of mind was not to desert him in his hour of need. We now have no picture of Job sitting in the ashes, desolate, nay, even cursing the day when he was born. God only willed to use this being who had long since, been entirely surrendered to Him, before his body was raised without spot or wrinkle in the resurrection life.

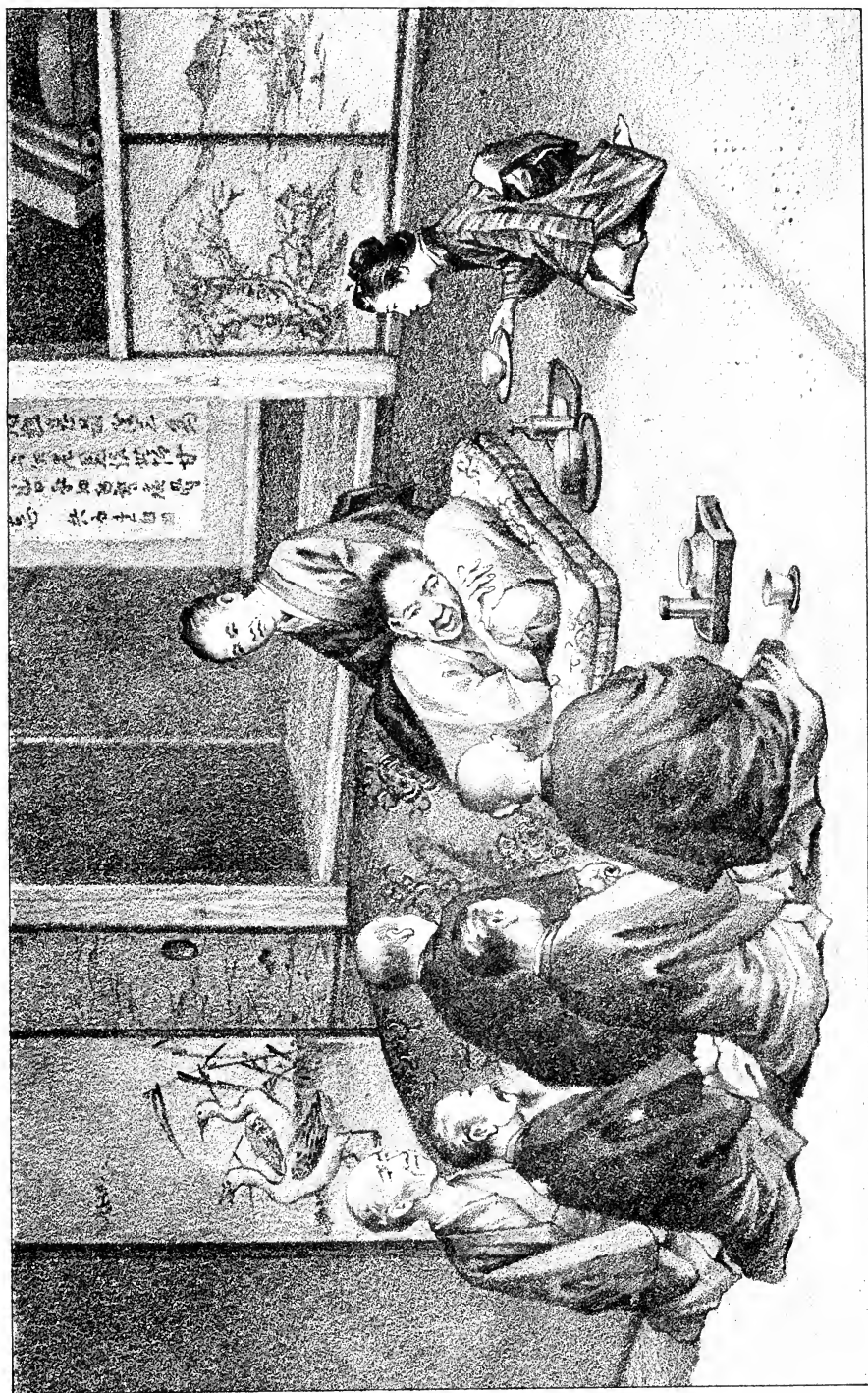
Those who knew him best were surprised to see that an inexplicable gladness seemed to rise in his soul, an exultant pleasure in anticipation of that which would have brought to most mortals only intolerable pain. There was something glorious to this man's bold and naturally war-loving spirit in the sense that he was now to suffer great pain for his Master, and with prayerful courage he summoned all his powers to contend in this conflict where he must witness his last bold confession before angels and men.

Oftentimes when evidently racked through and through with pain he would smile and rejoice at his privileges. Having no means of his own he and his wife were provided with shelter in a dingy house situated upon a side-street and used as a preaching chapel. Kase even found a source of self gratulation in this mean abode and

he would glance around at his quarters with the pride of one enjoying a luxurious mansion, and speak of how God had privileged him to be sick in the very abode that He had chosen for a place for His Presence to dwell. When in various ways reminded of his poverty by the necessary privation to which he was subjected, he would merely say, "I have no fear that God has left me," and by ways and means which others knew not of, the money did continue to flow into that sick room, and his wants were supplied. He would sometimes say as though following the course of his secret reflections, "If I lay here through my own fault, I should deserve to suffer want, but why should I dread the future while I trust in the God who clothes the lilies of the field, who feeds the birds of the air, and who has called me to lie here day after day until He has finished his work with me." David in Psalm CXLVI:2. has fitly described his frame of mind. "While I live will I praise the Lord: I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being."

During this period he was privileged to have the peculiarly blessed ministrations of a faithful man of God, and this man testified at his funeral to the reactionary influences which such a sick room had worked upon him. Telling most pathetically the story of the ascent of Elijah, he described how the chariot of fire had taken up the great prophet into heaven and how his cloak had fallen upon Elisha. Then after claiming that this sick man had been his master, his teacher, he devoutly in the presence of all, raised his eyes filled with tears toward heaven and invoked God that the cloak of this man might fall upon him. Oftentimes, he said, he had told this dying Christian the story of "Muller's life of trust," and he described how his faith had been strengthened by the account of this other life.

In the early stages of his sufferings Kase had fondly hoped that one day he would again be enabled to renew the conflict, and like a brave soldier taking a brief furlough until his wounds were healed, he would talk much of the time ahead and of what he would do for his Master when he was again in the fight and when gradually he came to realize that this was not to be, he loved to compare his present state and future hope. At such times, looking pathetically at his wasting limbs he would recall plaintively the days when in all manly sports he had been filled with youthful joy and vigor. There



A Sick Room Scene.



were moments when he seemed verging upon morbid reflections, but he would soon again rally his spirits, and the color would rise in his sunken cheeks as he spoke of the time when "having put off his earthly house of this tabernacle, he would have a building of God, a house not made with hands eternal in the heavens."

One day when describing the future life in glowing colors his wife, who tenderly loved him, could not refrain from tears, as the thought came strongly to her that she must soon be separated from him, when he who had been her companion and constant joy for many long years, would pass away from her sight. He looked mildly at her and with a touch of reproach in his voice, he said. "If I were going to Tōkyō you would not cry, why then give way when I tell you that I am going to be with my Saviour and in my heavenly Father's home."

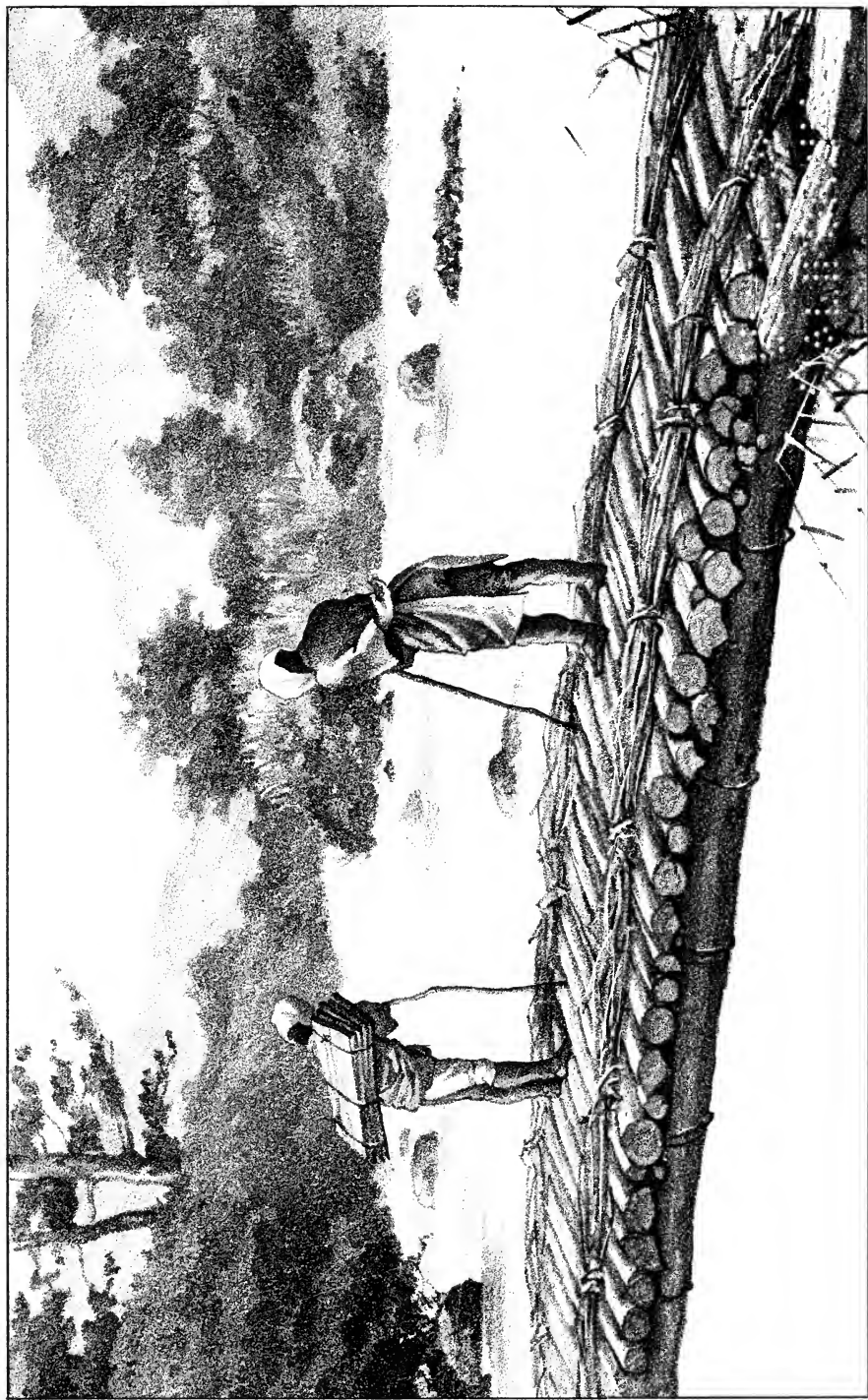
And so the days of his sickness sped along—sped along, did I say? they would certainly have dragged with many an one in a similar condition. But how could they with him who spent his time in counting his blessings and in offering thanks for every new evidence of the favor of God which day by day found its way into that sick-room. To be with such a man was a benediction from heaven direct, to be near him was to be near to God, for, really, he seemed to breathe in an atmosphere different from that of other men in a lower sphere of existence. Neither stillness nor company seemed to fatigue him, for he always appeared to be basking in a bright effulgence which came from the very throne of the Deity itself. When alone he could seek messages and lessons from God to tell out to others, and when in company God verily seemed to come into him, and his countenance became radiant and his conversation heavenly. Did he do any good? Does the stream which trickles through the waste desert in a silver thread of cool, refreshing water fed from a perennial source do any good?

Do the refreshing showers and the glorious sunshine have any effect upon universal nature? Does the promise have any meaning, "as the rain which cometh down and the snow from heaven and returneth not thither but watereth the earth—so shall my word be that goeth out of my mouth—it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

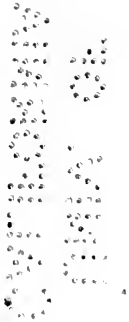
Through the village of Nikkō and out into the broad valley beyond rushes a bold stream, watering the country for hundreds of miles, fertilizing the fields, causing abundant rice crops to spring forth in their season, giving drink and sustenance to man and beast. Following this stream to its source, we climb a high mountain about four thousand feet above the level of the sea, encountering at every turn as we go this same boiling and bubbling torrent. After an ascent of many hours we hear at last the boom of a great waterfall and we come upon "Kegon falls," which roar over a cliff of solid rock to a base about three hundred and fifty feet below.

This bold stream of water, the Yosemite of Japan, is the overflow from Lake Chūzenji, a vision of rare beauty which presently breaks upon the view. We are now on the top of a mountain in whose hollow summit this glorious lake is situated, over two miles wide and nearly eight miles long, with its deep basin of sparkling water—clear to the bottom, cool, sparkling, never-failing. Its height above the sea-level is four thousand three hundred and seventy-five feet, and it mirrors in its glassy surface a massive mountain called "Nantaizan," which rises from its edge to a perpendicular height of about three thousand eight hundred feet. Beautiful Chūzenji is a natural waterhead and is an appropriate figure of a spiritual fountain head at which all men may slake their infinite thirst and become themselves sources of spiritual supplies to others. "In the last, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried: If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth in me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." Dear reader, we should seek what the Saviour has to offer at whatever cost.

There is in every heart at bottom a capacity for separating the true from the false, for sifting deceit and hypocrisy from sincerity and earnestness. There is an ineradicable difference between ore in the rough and the shining metal which has passed through the crucible. Any one can detect the difference between show and substance, between tinsel and gold. It only needed intercourse with this sufferer to realize that back of his life was a supernatural power which was its force and stay. He had been truly buried with Christ in baptism, had been made conformable to His death and now had risen with Him into newness of life.



The River Daiya at Nikkō.



The effect of such a sick-room upon the life around may be better imagined than described. There would have been many who were distant silent observers, some who were nearer, and others still who became fully persuaded. Even though he may not have succeeded in finally conquering some adamant, money-bound hearts, yet it must have been his privilege sometimes to look into the moistened eye of a hard man of business, and to do this even once should be to a Christian a joy forever. Even a victim of pleasure would occasionally have stepped aside for a brief moment to see the straight and narrow way to which this pilgrim pointed before finally parting company with him and passing on with other careless ones who had already made their choice of the broad road which leadeth to destruction. The neighboring Obaasans (old women) at mention of his name, would gravely have shaken their heads and nervously handled their beads and might they not have been seen later kneeling before the altar of Buddha and praying their "Namu Amida Butsu"—"Hail eternal Buddha!" with more than usual earnestness? The begging priest might now and then have reported a perceptible decline in the paying out of the temple alms in the neighborhood of this sick man's house, and, if nothing else did, this news would have roused the priests from their lethargy for a time. Their lengthened consultations over this awkward perplexity might have resulted in a series of resolutions to put fresh flowers upon the altar of the Buddha, to beat the temple gongs, to intone the sacred books, and to pray for the rapid departure of this man's soul rather than for its peace in a future world.

Sho gyō mūjō	"All phenomena are fleeting
Ze sho meppō	This is the law of becoming and perishing
Shō metsu metsui	Becoming and perishing shall perish completely
Jaku metsu i raku	And the calm perishing (i.e. Nirvana) will be bliss."

Etsuki's wife had long reserved to herself the right of private judgment and had preferred for some time to stand aloof from her husband upon questions of faith. But before this time she had yielded, and had long since become a fervent sharer in all his spiritual joys.

Just here it would be well to insert a touching tribute to these two earnest Christians from the pen of one who knew them well. "For the first six months of his illness in Fukushima, and for more than a year before, when he was a school teacher in the village of Kanawagawa, some seven miles from the former place, Rev. John G. Waller and wife, Canadian Missionaries of the Church of England were stationed at Fukushima. They speak in the highest terms of their intercourse with Mr. and Mrs. Kase, how they would after a hard week's work walk into Fukushima to church, over what were generally very bad roads, how earnest they were in the services—of how, amidst the many disappointments of mission work this pair were always a source of comfort and encouragement. He was very fond of singing the hymn which he sang on the morning of his death, it being his favorite.

When in December of 1891 Bishop Bickersteth, of the Church of England in Japan came to Fukushima to administer confirmation, one of the candidates was Mrs. Kase. After the service was over, one of the first questions asked by the Bishop was, "Who was that man who responded so distinctly?" It was Kase Etsuki. When at the end of 1892 Mr. and Mrs. Waller were removed to another field of work, the pain of parting with their little band of Christians seemed to reach the climax in the case of Mr. and Mrs. Kase. Mrs. Waller says in relation to this scene, "I don't think I can ever forget how I felt when I said goodbye in the little sick room. Mr. Kase raised himself with difficulty to a sitting posture and taking one of my hands in both of his, bade me farewell, thanked me for the little I had done for him, asked the Lord to bless us in our future field of work, and finished by saying that we should never meet again here, but that he certainly would be among those who would welcome me in Heaven. In the meantime Mrs. Kase had thrown her arms about me and sobbed her farewells on my shoulder. Even as the tears streamed down the cheeks of all three of us, the thought came to me that it was strange the parting with these Japanese, with different dress, language, and customs, seemed to try me almost more than when I bade goodbye to our dear ones in Canada."

CHAPTER VIII.

“ Every time one hears of it (death)
To think
It is the sorrow of another
That is greater frailty
Than even his who is no more.”

On the subject of the frailty of human life, a popular work among the Japanese “*Shingaku michi no hanashi*” or “Discourses on moral philosophy,” thus reads when translated:—

“ Thus moment after moment, hour by hour, are we paying back our bodies to the creditor. And when our yearly payment account is all settled, *Tentō sama* (that is, “the Heavenly master”) says reckoning the account,—“Twice one are—your account is all settled, I congratulate you.” Then he draws his pen across his book. And then we are borne to the family temple on the shoulders of the bearers, and it is “*Namu kara tanō*” and “*Chan goran don.*” and this is the sound of the flinging down the soroban (merchant’s counting machine). And yet even when they hear such sounds, common people think of it as only the settling of the yearly payment * * * And so they say, “what shall I do in the spring? In the autumn I will do so and so.” And recklessly planning for the future they neglect the essential present * * for all of us the present—that is the very midst of death, living as we are that is dying.”

The good book has the same thing to say, reader, to you and me, in different language. *Jas. iv: 13, 14.* “Go to now, ye that say—to-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year and buy and sell and get gain. Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live and do this or that.” A missionary who was present at *Kase Etsuki’s* deathbed thus writes:—

"I thank God that I was allowed to share with others the great privilege which those partook who knew Kase Etsuki, even though he crossed my life just as he was being called away to his final reward in the heavenly kingdom. By a previous appointment I was to be in the city of Fukushima and vicinity for Easter Sunday and a brief season thereafter in the year 1893, for the purpose of helping to comfort and stablish the faithful few in that district.

The journey was nine hours by rail from Tōkyō and in this interval I was moved to pray much that God would be with me and make the visitation a blessing to those to whom I was sent. Nor could I help wondering why so frail a vessel had been chosen for such an errand. I asked myself repeatedly why the Lord had not called some other who might be better equipped for all that was needful for such an important mission. I was to understand later that the main object of my appointment was that I might learn, and that little else than this would be required of me, my teacher was in Fukushima by Divine appointment awaiting my arrival. I felt, too, a strange presentiment that some peculiar exigence might require words of special and appropriate comfort in ministering to a flock so scattered, and so I prayed that God would give me words when required out of the fulness of His treasures. Surely "the spirit Himself helpeth our infirmities" and when we know not what we should pray for as we ought, "He Himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." Arrived in Fukushima, I was informed that a sick man was awaiting the Holy Communion in the preaching-place where he lived and that he could not last much longer. As it was late I retired for the night, and on Easter Day I arose early and asked that God would that day fill our hearts with a grateful sense of all the memories revived by the season.

I received an early summons to attend the bedside of the dying man who requested that he might receive the Holy Communion before the regular hour for service. About 9 a.m. I arrived at the preaching chapel and found there a poor sufferer whose wasted form lay upon some futons (coverlets), and there were appliances to allay the fever which was evidently fast consuming him. First sight told me that he was passing rapidly "into the valley and shadow of death."

I can never forget the expression of exuberant joy and perfect trust which lit up his face, though he was apparently aware of his

critical condition. Feeling the extreme risk of waiting I proceeded at once with "the office of the Holy Communion for the sick," and administered the elements to the sick man, his wife, and the faithful man who had been his spiritual adviser. I feared from his appearance that he would hardly be enabled to rally his faculties sufficiently to partake in a state of consciousness, but by an effort he roused himself and remained conscious through all, though when I administered the wine he was too faint to take it from the cup and was obliged to drink it through a rubber tube.

After this I sat beside him, and he with real affection put forward his hand which I clasped with a fervor which must have expressed the emotions I felt. It seemed as though God had indeed come down to us in the likeness of men, so much of his love was written on this countenance. I reminded him that it was Easter Day and that, may be, he would be called away to be with His Lord on this the anniversary of His Resurrection. The catechist, who sat near his head said with much tenderness in his voice "It is no accident that the minister has come on Easter Day to give you the Holy Communion and when you are so near your end"—at which he brightly smiled. I reminded him that they who partake of the Holy Communion in faith are really feeding spiritually upon the Body and Blood of Christ and have His life dwelling in them. I then read the passage John vi: 56. I was glad to assure him that he was in my belief entirely safe, and that soon he would be with his Saviour. He smiled gratefully.

After this he called for a hymn, and finding difficulty in recalling the words, he presently said "No 25" which we accordingly sung, as follows:—

Kami no megumi	Kutno ino miya	Shu no sukui wa
Shu Jesu no ai,	Shizuga fuseya	Yo ni amaneshi
Yutaka ni mitsu	Tsui ni morenu	Nakite kitare
Yo no mi to no.	Uki tameshi.	Kui yotsu mi
Ukeyo megumi	Hito wa kusa no	Namida kawaku
Sono awaremi	Hana ni hitoshi,	Tsumi kiyomaru
Kanashimi use	Asa no hae wa	Ai nomi kawa
Uki mo kien	Yube ni chiran	Uke tamawan

Chorus

Kono to no ni
Toku kitare
Uke yo tamawan
Sono megumi

Chorus

Tokoshie no
Sachi zo aru
Kenonni to no ni
Toku kitare

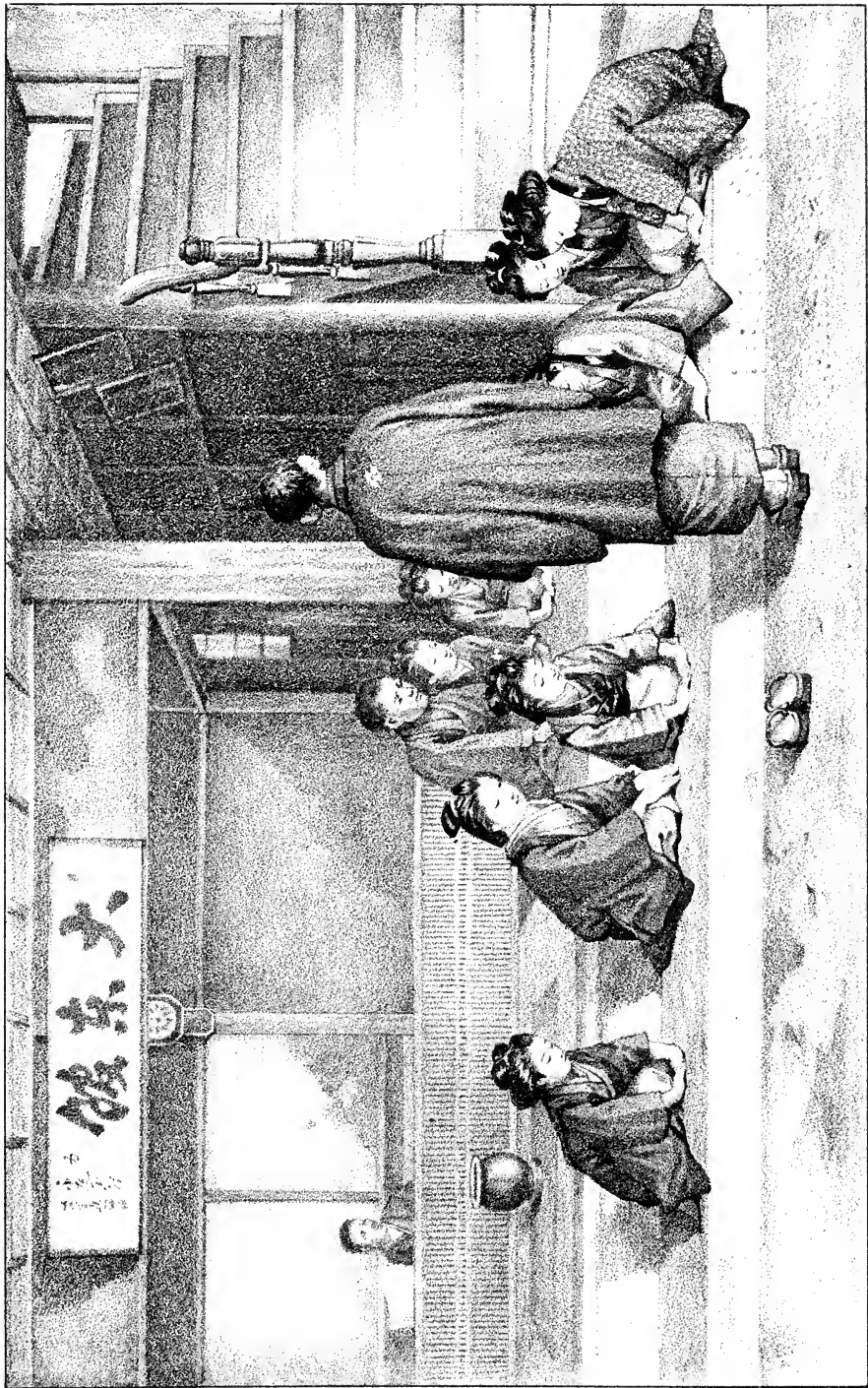
Chorus

Yorokobi wa
Tsune ni michi
Ukiwa usuru,
Kono mi to no.

When, to our amazement, a voice and strength not his own seemed to be given him, and half raising his emaciated, but still powerful frame, he sung in a clear voice with great fervor every word, closing with us in a full tone on the Amen. It was impossible to keep back the tears, and I could myself only follow with a voice choked by the emotions which filled me, looking wonderingly meanwhile upon the glowing face of this dying man, thus facing death in the midst of heathenism with unflinching faith in God, our Saviour. The Japanese, who have lines of poetry prepared to describe all situations, thus express these surprises which often appear of unexpected exhibitions of character amid the most uncongenial surroundings.

The hymn "No 20" in the Hymnal of the Japanese church is not a translation of any English original and so is curious as a production of some Japanese hymnologist. It first appeared as Hymn "No 25" in the Congregationalist Hymn book, and the compiler of that hymnal states that it was handed to him by a Japanese. The following is a good rendering of the Japanese and was handed me by a friend. Tune *Sheaves*.

- | | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Lo! the love of Jesus | 2. Every lofty palace | 3. Lo! our God's salvation |
| And the Father's mercy | Every lowly cottage | Through the world prevaieth |
| Fill this Holy Temple: | Hath its times of sadness | Come with bitter weeping, |
| Children, come and pray! | Shadow and decay: | All your sins repent; |
| Grace He freely giveth: | Man is like a flower, | All your tears He drieth |
| Oh! receive it gladly; | Blooming in the morning, | All your sins He cleanseth |
| All your woes and sorrows | And ere evening closeth, | And His eyes of mercy |
| Soon will fade away. | Fading quite away. | On your face are bent |
| To His Temple come! | In this Temple reigns | Joy is ever here; |
| Joyfully receive | Everlasting joy: | Sorrows flee away |
| All His grace and mercy | Children come and welcome | In His Holy Temple: |
| God but waits to give. | Bliss without alloy! | Children come and pray, |



‘When we enter the hotels of Japan, they always say “Welcome.”’



“None knew the sapling at its birth,
 Deep in the mountains' forest shade;
 But when it bloomed, the cherry's worth
 In glorious blossoms was displayed.”

There seemed to be a very halo of glory about him as though the rays from the heavenly city were already falling upon him. Some mortals passing in the street might have thought we were singing the requiem of a departing spirit. It may have been that as our feeble voices died away in the closing verse, the strain was renewed in a mighty volume by the choirs of heaven and was used to usher this one, now joining the company of the Church triumphant, into the glories of eternity. Upon the close of the hymn he sank back exhausted but still with the same joyful smile which never faded from his face while I was present and which, I was afterwards assured, was its settled expression when the death pallors had gathered upon it.

He feebly called for wine, having felt relieved by the small draught taken at the communion. He evidently wanted to face the destroyer with the same unflinching courage his Great Master had done that the words might he said in truth over him,—“Oh! death where is thy sting, oh! grave where is thy victory.” “It will be a blessed thing if I can go to heaven on Easter Day,” he said in a clear voice, and one could plainly see no shadow of doubt upon his wasted face, but it shone brightly with the peace of God. It was hard to leave such an one, and I found great pleasure in talking to him of the time when his spirit would be freed from the burden of the flesh and he would be with Jesus. When he asked my name I begged that he would only think of one name as that alone could be of use to him now. He forcibly responded, “I cannot possibly forget the name of my Saviour.” And now the Lord seemed to be answering my prayer of the day before, and I was filled with yearning to speak words of comfort. He seemed pleased when I said “When we enter the hotels of Japan, they always say. “Welcome” but these words do not really come from the heart. When, however, he should enter heaven he would hear a welcome which he would know was true. I reminded him that he had on earth often been alone with few who could realize his hopes and fears—he had been in this world, as I was at that time in Fukushima—only for a time—a

stranger" that he was now nearing his real home and friends whose aspirations and joys would be all like his own. The catechist asked if he understood, his eyes opened full upon the man. "Know what he means by a stranger?" said he. "Ah, had not this man known, had he not often trod the wine-press alone, had he not felt the chill of isolation, had he not looked for help, but there was no man." Back over the pathway of this life could we have gone, we might have seen this poor soul battling and struggling bravely along the hot and dusty high way of human life with heavy step and aching heart, up the rock-hewn steps his Master had trod before "alone, yet not alone." Was it needful to ask Kase Etsuki what the word "pilgrim and stranger" means to a Christian? We read the 23rd Psalm and now it could be readily seen that his strength was perceptibly waning. After this I was called away to the regular services of the Church and saw him no more until he lay tranquilly reposing in his coffin on the day following. I was told that morning after service that the death mists were evidently gathering in his eyes and that from the time I left his bedside, he had said nothing more.

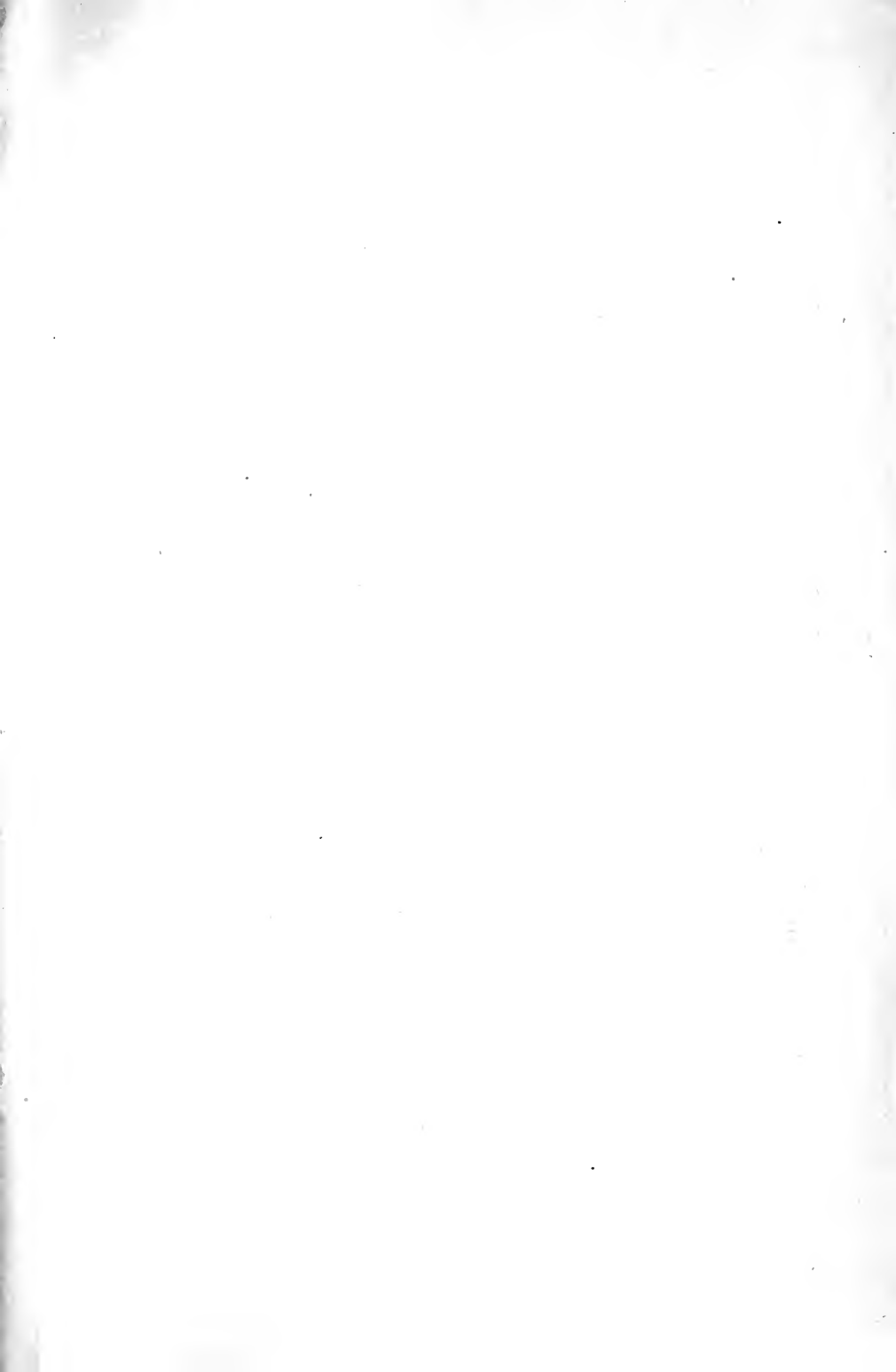
Kase Etsuki passed peacefully away on this same Easter Sunday at about 3.30 P.M., as a child might fall into unconsciousness in the strong arms of a father. At his funeral on Easter Monday a small congregation gathered about his coffin in the little preaching chapel which had been his home. The coffin was tastefully draped in black and decorated with a beautiful cross and crown made of cedar and pine and with plum blossoms and with artificial flowers peeping out here and there from the back ground of evergreens. The artificial flowers were the last act of love from the hands of his faithful wife.

The catechist made one of the most feeling and impressive of addresses, recounting much that is contained in this little memoir, and adding that the sick man had been looking forward eagerly to the visitation of a clergyman, had by mere force of will lasted until Easter Day, had wanted to receive the Holy Communion on the previous evening, but finding it was too late had patiently looked for the morning to come as his powers were fast waning.

His body was carried to a crematory and burned and for this reason the funeral services were postponed until late in the afternoon. When the service had been feelingly rendered and all had been said, it was quite dark and so a little procession carrying lanterns followed

the remains through the streets of Fukushima and along the rough country roads to the bank of a river on the farther side of the city. From thence only the stalwart coffin carriers and the catechist accompanied the body of Kase Etsuki to a distant mountain where it was buried. The last relic I saw was the sword he wore when a Samurai, fit emblem of his faithful services for his master. At the funeral all agreed that the dear brother had merely gone before us, and there were few present who did not echo the hearty wish that we might follow him in God's own time."

Mrs. Kase remained for some months after this an occupant of the little preaching chapel from which all the brightness had now flown. She then wearily turned her face towards her husband's old home in the province of Mino, whither she had been constantly summoned by urgent letters from relations. On the way she called at my house in Tōkyō and we talked for several hours over the subject always dear to her, she spoke with bated breath and tearful eyes of him who had left her and recalled much which this narrative contains. Soon after her arrival letters came from her new home, telling of how she was endeavoring to witness for the truth as it is in Jesus to those whose ears were hardened. In order to preserve the family line the relations agreed to build her a house which she was to occupy with an adopted son. Little had they reckoned upon the intensity of her faith when they later required of her that she should occupy this little house which they had fitted up upon condition that she would abjure her faith in Christ. She met their proposal with an obstinate refusal and at last decided to give up her all and devote the rest of her days to Bible-work, for which she is now preparing in Tōkyō.





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